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**Translation as Metaphor:  
Yan Fu and His Translation Principles**

**by**

**Elsie Kit Ying Chan**

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Doctor of Philosophy in Translation Studies

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## Declaration

The research work leading to this thesis has been undertaken in accordance with the safety policy of the University of Warwick. The thesis contains certain materials, indicated in the text where appropriate, from the following papers by the author:

‘Translation Principles and the Translator’s Agenda: A Systemic Approach to Yan Fu’, in *Crosscultural Transgressions: Research Models in Translation Studies II. Historical and Ideological Issues*, ed. by Theo Hermans (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2002), pp. 61-75.

‘Translation of Buddhist Scriptures into Chinese: A Power-Governed Discourse’, in *Beyond the Western Tradition: Translation Perspectives XI 2000*, ed. by Marilyn Gaddis Rose (Binghamton: Centre for Research in Translation, State University of New York, 2000), pp. 187-98.

‘A Historical and Polysystemic Study of Yan Fu’s Translation’ = 以史爲綱，多元互通 – 嚴復翻譯之系統研究, *Chung Wai Literary Monthly* = 中外文學, 30 (2001), 3: 7-62.<sup>1</sup>

‘Tradition and Mediation: The Prospect of Translation Studies in China in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ = 繼往開來，融通中西 – 廿一世紀中國翻譯研究展望, *Translation Quarterly* = 翻譯季刊, 15 (2000), 51-74.

It is hereby confirmed that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, Chinese titles are listed first in Hanyu Pinyin transcription, followed by the original title in Chinese within brackets (《 》for a book or journal and 〈 〉for an article) and then my translation in English within square brackets. Where the English translation of a Chinese title is provided by the publisher, this is indicated by a ‘=’ sign between the English and Chinese titles, and the Hanyu Pinyin transcription will not be supplied. Chinese publishers are first listed in English translation and then in Chinese within parenthesis.

## Abstract

This thesis was motivated by turn-of-the-century concerns in Chinese translation studies about the validity of the long-held translation principles proposed by Chinese translator Yan Fu and about the relevance of Yan's paradigmatic translation project to future research. It rereads the translation practice and intellectual thought of Yan Fu by adopting an interdisciplinary approach restructuring past studies that have been isolated in the areas of intellectual history and translation theory. The examination of his translation practice through a series of metaphor suggests, contrary to existing consensus, that faithfulness to the source text is irrelevant to his translation project. His translation principles are not pure literary notions; rather they are tied to the Confucian literary and exegetical tradition. These findings unfold new potentialities for a major research topic that has been challenged as having reached a cul-de-sac and point to a new direction for development in Chinese translation studies.

New findings from the field of intellectual history help to clarify existing inconsistencies and political biases concerning Yan Fu's persona and historicize him as a persistent seeker of the Confucian *dao*. This testifies to the need to reassess his translation project in relation to the Confucian-based Chinese tradition. Close examination of his remarks on translation, correspondence and other writings suggests that his words and deeds are steeped in Confucian poetics, which represents a totally different concept from modern pure literary poetics. His commitment to Confucian ontological faith and ultimate concern for spiritual or cosmological transcendence are similar to the ends of some of the most influential translators in Chinese history and marks a higher level operation of translation as a tool for higher learning than as an occupation.

Through translation as intellectual critique, Yan mended indigenous coordinates for gauging alien propositions and constructed a hybridized discourse for reforming indigenous epistemology and methodology. His manipulative translations, as he claimed in his last extended translation, were intended for metaphorical explication of a certain subject with the source text as a point of departure, rather than an end to return to. Ironically the repercussions of the manipulative evolutionary discourse he engendered became further manipulated by the newer generations and fuelled more violent changes in a system on the verge of a crisis. While this subsequently led to the disruption of the conservative Confucian poetics and the gradual reform agenda he had desired, the reexamination of his translations and translation practice sheds



light on system regeneration and the inheritance of Chinese culture in a modern world.

The presentation of Yan Fu's translations suggests that he followed the Confucian literary tradition, which allowed exegetical and eisegetical interpretation of classics and commentaries for narrating the *dao*, and attempted mediation of a changing *dao* through translation as intellectual critique. Hermeneutical rereading of his *xin-da-ya* translation principles in relation to the Confucian exegetical tradition frees the study of his principles from recurrent perspectives and offers a systematic approach to the study of *xin*, *da* and *ya* as core values in Confucian poetics meaning faith, decorum and virtue respectively. His exercise of Confucian cosmological faith through translation releases the source text for a dialogue with a broader cosmic text, whereby the interaction of time and tradition-bound discourses obliges the translator to repeatedly highlight and transcend his own interpretive horizons and move the physical text beyond its original psychological and historical contexts, evincing dynamic interaction with the reader. This perspective offers a philosophical dimension to translation and valorizes translation as a virtuous act of conduct in the Chinese tradition and as cosmological transference of concepts and images in human's pursuit of truth and being.

The promotion of the complex notion of translation beyond the word itself to the realm of metaphor facilitates exchange between languages and systems at the level of *tertium comparationis* and enables reasoning at the level of the universal logos. In the present study of Yan Fu, this helps to avoid recurrent arguments and leads to more balanced and constructive perspectives for the future development of a major research topic in Chinese translation studies. It also opens the possibility of exchange between a traditional theory and modern theories and between the Chinese translation tradition and other traditions.

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## Introduction

The construction of a history of translation is the first task of a *modern* theory of translation. What characterizes modernity is not an infatuation with the past, but a movement of retrospection which is an infatuation with itself ... It is impossible to separate the history of translation from the history of languages, of cultures, and of literatures – even of religions and of nations. To be sure, this is not a question of mixing everything up, but of showing how in each period or in each given historical setting the practice of translation is *articulated* in relation to the practice of literature, of languages, of the several intercultural and interlinguistic exchanges... To write the history of translation is to patiently rediscover the infinitely complex and devious network in which translation is caught up in each period or in different settings. And it is to turn the historical knowledge acquired from this activity into an opening of our *present*.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis was motivated by turn-of-the-century concerns in Chinese translation studies about the validity of the long-held translation principles proposed by Chinese translator Yan Fu and about the relevance of Yan's century-old paradigmatic model of translation to future translation research.<sup>2</sup> It attempts to reread the translation practice and intellectual thought of Yan Fu by adopting an interdisciplinary approach restructuring past studies on Yan Fu, which are usually isolated in the separate areas

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<sup>1</sup> Antoine Berman, *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*, trans. by S. Heyvaert (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 1-3; my ellipses.

<sup>2</sup> Chinese names and terms in this thesis are primarily transcribed according to the Hanyu Pinyin system and then followed by the exact Chinese characters. See Commission for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography, State Language Commission, P.R.C., 'Basic Rules for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography', in *ABC Chinese-English Dictionary*, ed. by John DeFrancis (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 835-45. Proper names may occasionally be transcribed by other systems as they appear in direct quotes or the publications concerned, or as they normally appear in Western literature, for instance, Yen Fu, Peking University and Sun Yat-sen. Specific Chinese terms will be italicized, usually followed by the exact term in Chinese and a literal translation in English in brackets, for instance, *dao* 道 (the way). In order to reveal the subtle and multiple meanings of culturally loaded terms, literal, and sometimes word-for-word translation will first be attempted before offering contextual translations in English, to avoid giving misleading 'equivalents' for what may otherwise be 'untranslatable' terms.

of intellectual history and translation theory. New readings of the complicated intellectual frame of mind of Yan Fu will be introduced, historicizing him as a pioneer intellectual seeking to construct a hybridized discourse for reforming the Confucian tradition through translation. Multi-dimensional illustration of Yan's deliberate enculturation of source texts and his discrepancy between theory and practice will be attempted, demonstrating the interplay of cultural, socio-political and ideological dynamics in translation as an act of cross-cultural, cross-temporal and cross-liminal mediation. By close examination of his commentary translations and translation principles, the profundity of Yan's translational discourse will further be examined and its broader implication to translation research discussed. His manipulative mediation between the Chinese and Western worlds of thought will be interpreted as an act of self-cultivation, through intellectual critique, for the attainment of social and cosmic order in line with the Confucian tradition, offering an ethical and ideological dimension to translation as an act of conduct and accomplishment. Accordingly, his translation principles will be interpreted against the Confucian exegetical tradition, offering an ontological and epistemological dimension to translation as a cosmological act of change and transference.

Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921) is often considered as the most important figure in Chinese translation history. First and foremost, his popular translation of modern Western science and thinking enlightened his countrymen and made him the most prominent translator in the third translation movement in China, which marked the beginning of massive and multifarious import of modern Western thinking into modern China. He was probably the first Chinese translator to cover such a wide scope of Western knowledge, and in such depth, outlining some of the most important



ideological and epistemological constructs on which modern Western systems and institutions were based. His major translations in classical Chinese are: *Tianyanlun*,<sup>3</sup> *Yuanfu*,<sup>4</sup> *Qunxue Siyan*,<sup>5</sup> *Qunji Quanjielun*,<sup>6</sup> *Shehui Tongquan*,<sup>7</sup> *Fayi*,<sup>8</sup> *Mill Mingxue*<sup>9</sup> and *Mingxue Qianshuo*.<sup>10</sup> Through his translations, Chinese intellectuals were made aware of the cultural heritage and institutional strength of their Other and were alarmed for the first time that the worth and even survival of their millennia-old civilization was threatened. The breadth and intensity of his translation, through

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<sup>3</sup> Yan Fu 嚴復 (trans.), *Tianyanlun* 天演論 [On Evolution] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1998; first woodblock print 1898). Based on Thomas H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1911; first publ. 1893).

<sup>4</sup> Yan Fu 嚴復 (trans.), *Yuanfu* 原富 [Whence Wealth], 2 vols. (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1901-1902). Based on Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, 1994; first publ. 1776).

<sup>5</sup> Yan Fu 嚴復 (trans.), *Qunxue Siyan* 群學肆言 [On the Study of the Group] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1903). Based on Herbert Spencer, *The Study of Sociology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969; first publ. 1873).

<sup>6</sup> Yan Fu 嚴復 (trans.), *Qunji Quanjielun* 群己群界論 [On the Distinction of Rights between Group and Self] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1903). Based on John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; first publ. 1859).

<sup>7</sup> Yan Fu 嚴復 (trans.), *Shehui Tongquan* 社會通詮 [Exposition on Society] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1904). Based on Edward Jenks, *A History of Politics* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1900).

<sup>8</sup> Yan Fu 嚴復 (trans.), *Fayi* 法意 [The Meaning of Laws], 2 vols. (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1904-1909). Based on Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. by Thomas Nugent (New York: Hafner Press, 1949; first publ. 1734).

<sup>9</sup> Yan Fu, *Mill Mingxue* 穆勒名學 [Mill's Study of Logic] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1905). Based on the first half of John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956; first publ. 1843).

<sup>10</sup> Yan Fu 嚴復 (trans.), *Mingxue Qianshuo* 名學淺說 [Elementary Study of Logic] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1909). Based on *Primer of Logic* by William Stanley Jevons published in 1870.

intellectual critique, provided the epistemological and methodological base for his scientific and polemical reflection of traditional Chinese thinking and learning and made him stand out among contemporary reform-minded intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century.

This also made Yan Fu one of the leading characters in Chinese intellectual history in a period of transition to modernity.<sup>11</sup> His political critiques and manipulative

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<sup>11</sup> Works on Yan Fu's thinking and scholarship abound. Anthologies and collections include: Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964); Li Chenggui 李承貴, *Zhongxi Wenhua Zhi Huitong – Yan Fu Zhongxi Wenhua Bijiao Yu Jiehe Sixiang Yanjiu* 中西文化之會通—嚴復中西文化比較與結合思想研究 [Mediation between Chinese and Western Culture – A Study of Yan Fu's Comparative and Syncretic Thinking on Chinese and Western Culture] (Nanchang: Jiangxi Renmin Chubanshe 江西人民出版社, 1997); Fujian Sheng Yan Fu Yanjiuhui 福建省嚴復研究會 (ed.), '93 *Yan Fu Guoji Xueshu Yantaohui Lunwenji* '93 嚴復國際學術研討會論文集 ['93 International Conference on Yan Fu Proceedings] (Fuzhou: Haixia Wenyi Chubanshe 海峽文藝出版社, 1995); Niu Yangshan 牛仰山 and Sun Hongni 孫鴻霓 (eds.), *Yan Fu Yanjiu Ziliao* 嚴復研究資料 [Research Materials on Yan Fu] (Fuzhou: Haixia Wenyi Chubanshe 海峽文藝出版社, 1990); Shangwu Yinshuguan Editorial Section 商務印書館編輯部 (ed.), *Lun Yan Fu Yu Yanyi Mingzhu* 論嚴復與嚴譯名著 [On Yan Fu and His Famous Translations] (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982); Wang Shi 王棧 (ed.), *Yan Fu Ji* 嚴復集 [Works of Yan Fu], 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986; first publ. 1957); *Yan Fu Heji* Editorial Committee “嚴復合集”編輯委員會 (ed.), *Yan Fu Heji* 嚴復合集 [A Collection of Yan Fu], 20 vols. (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998); Huang, Kewu 黃克武, *The Raison D'être of Freedom: Yen Fu's Understanding and Critique of John Stuart Mill's Liberalism* = 自由的所以然：嚴復對約翰彌爾自由主義思想的認識與批判 (Taipei: Yunchen Wenhua 允晨文化, 1998); Yang Zhengdian 楊正典, *Yan Fu Pingzhuan* 嚴復評傳 [A Critique of Yan Fu] (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Chubanshe 社會科學出版社, 1997); Faculty of Arts, National Chengchi University 國立政治大學文學院 (ed.), *Zhongguo Jindai Wenhua De Jiegou Yu Chongjian: Yan Fu* 中國近代文化的解構與重建：嚴復 [Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Contemporary Chinese Culture: Yan Fu] (Taipei: Faculty of Arts, National Chengchi University 國立政治大學文學院, 1996); *Zhongri Jindai Dui Xifang Zhexue Sixiang De Shequ – Yan Fu Yu Riben Qimeng Xuezhe* 中日近代對西方政治哲學思想的攝取—嚴復與日本啓蒙學者 [Borrowing of Western Political and Philosophical Thinking in Modern China and Japan – Yan Fu and Japanese Enlightenment Scholars] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui



translations offered a hybridized discourse for critical reflection of the Chinese tradition with reference to the Western tradition, which, apart from shaping a new worldview, was further manipulated by his contemporaries and especially the younger generation to develop reformist and revolutionary thinking in modern China.<sup>12</sup> This has given rise to two prevalent views that have dominated research on Yan Fu in the last century. One view, which probably begins with Benjamin Schwartz, holds that Yan Fu's primary goal of translation was to find from Western nations a formula of 'power and wealth' to be transplanted in China, and this caused deliberate distortion

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Kexue Chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 1996); Zhang Zhijian 張志建, *Yan Fu Xueshu Sixiang Yanjiu* 嚴復學術思想研究 [Study on Yan Fu's Scholarship and Thought] (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1995); Wang Zhongjiang 王中江, *Yan Fu* 嚴復 [Yan Fu] (Hong Kong: Haixiao Chubanshe 海嘯出版, 1997), *Yan Fu Yu Yukichi Fukuzawa – Zhongri Qimeng Sixiang Bijiao* 嚴復與福澤諭吉 – 中日啓蒙思想比較 [Yan Fu and Yukichi Fukuzawa – A Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Enlightenment Thought] (Kaifeng: Henan Daxue Chubanshe 河南大學出版社, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> Contemporary scholar Ren Jiyu considers Yan Fu to be the prime representative figure in modern China to systematically introduce the social, economic, political and intellectual thinking that constituted the theoretical base of the modern capitalistic West as a challenge to the old thinking of feudal China. Comparing Yan with other reform-minded contemporaries who were primarily concerned about knowledge that was directly associated with the military, technical or economic strength of Western nations, Ren comments that Yan enjoyed a 'more special status' in intellectual history because of his depth and vision. Not only did he provide important 'first-hand' information about Western theories to the majority of intellectuals who were inclined to 'bourgeoisie revolution' at that time; the evolutionary thinking he introduced in particular influenced a few generations of intellectuals who were pioneers of the May Fourth new cultural movement and of the Communist revolution. Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 (ed.), *Zhongguo Zhhexueshi* 中國哲學史 [A History of Chinese Philosophy], 4 vols. (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1998; first publ. 1963), IV, pp. 208-09. Contemporary philosopher Li Zehou remarks that the enlightenment effect of Yan Fu's translation of 'capitalistic literature' not only fell on 'bourgeoisie reformers' but more notably on the following generations of 'patriotic thinkers and revolutionaries'. Li Zehou 李澤厚, 'Lun Yan Fu' 論嚴復 [On Yan Fu], first publ. 1977, in *Zhongguo Sixiangshi Lun* 中國思想史論 [On the History of Chinese Thought], 3 vols. (Anhui: Wenyi Chubanshe 文藝出版社, 1999), II, pp. 580-615 (p. 588).

of basic Western ideas such as science, liberty and democracy.<sup>13</sup> The other view, probably following Zhou Zhenfu, contends that Yan Fu showed unreserved preference for Western thinking over traditional Chinese values in his early years but reverted to Confucianism and monarchical government in his late years.<sup>14</sup>

The same views have also influenced perspectives in the field of translated literature in China in the past century, with Yan Fu's manipulative practice and views about translation being the most recurrent topics in research. Generally recognizing that Yan's patriotic enlightenment agenda necessitates, or even justifies his rewriting approach, most researchers have focused on textual comparison of his paraphrastic translations and their source texts, as well as rationalization of his translation principles. The tripartite translation principles that he briefly introduced before the main text of his first major translation – *xin, da, ya*, generally interpreted literally as faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance respectively – are usually studied or debated as epigrammatic guidelines for translation and translation criticism.<sup>15</sup> In theory and practice, they provide a reference model for subsequent May Fourth translators to reflect upon.<sup>16</sup> In the 1950s, the *xin-da-ya* principles were adopted for the state

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<sup>13</sup> Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*.

<sup>14</sup> Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫, *Yan Fu Sixiang Shuping* 嚴復思想述評 [A Critique of Yan Fu's Thinking] (Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1964; first publ. 1940).

<sup>15</sup> See Yan Fu, 'Tianyanlun Yi Liyan' 天演論譯例言 [General Remarks on Translation of *Tianyanlun*], 10 June 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji* 嚴復集 [Works of Yan Fu], ed. by Wang Shi 王栻, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986), V, pp. 1321-23. See also Yan Fu, 'General Remarks on Translation' = 天演論譯例言, trans. by C. Y. Hsu 徐兆鏞, *Renditions*, 1 (1973), 4-6.

<sup>16</sup> Based on their literal interpretation of *xin-da-ya*, May Fourth translators, such as Lu Xun 魯迅, Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, Hu Shi 胡適, Mao Dun 茅盾 and Chen Xiying 陳西滢, extensively discussed the issues of literal vs. free translation, accuracy vs. fluency and the vernacular vs. the literary language.



translation project of Communist literature in China.<sup>17</sup> Many critics today regard his translation principles as epitome of past rambling remarks on translation and a golden paradigm of Chinese translation theory.<sup>18</sup> Few Chinese in the field of translation have not discussed Yan Fu's *xin-da-ya* principles as translation standards in one way or

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<sup>17</sup> According to the Chinese editors of *The Complete Works of Stalin*, the guiding principle of their translation and editing project was 'the dialectical unity of *xin*, *da* and *ya*'. Their definition of *xin* was 'faithful and accurate transference of the meaning, style and spirit of the source text', *da* the achievement of *xin* in 'accurate and fluent Chinese' and *ya* 'the further development of *da*'. The unity of the three standards was thought to be achieved when the reception of Chinese readers of the translation was the same as that of foreign readers of the source text. This interpretation became a central issue in subsequent translation discourses. See Zhonggong Zhongyang Ma-En-Lie-Si Zhuzuo Bianyiju Jiaoshenshi 中共中央馬恩列斯著作編譯局校審室 [Editorial Office of the Translation Bureau of the Works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin under the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee], 'Jiti Yijiao *Stalin Qunji* Di-yi-er Liang Juan De Yixie Tiyan' 集體譯校“斯大林全集”第一、二兩卷的一些體驗 [Some Observations from the Group Translation of *The Complete Works of Stalin* Volumes 1 and 2], *Erwen Jiaoxue* 俄文教學 [Russian Teaching], (3) 1954, 24-26.

<sup>18</sup> This view is best represented by the following two chapters stressing Yan Fu's paradigmatic status in the development of translation theory in China: Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋, 'Woguo Zicheng Tixi De Fanyi Lilun' 我國自成體系的翻譯理論 [Chinese Translation Theory: A System of Our Own], in *Fanyi Lunji* 翻譯論集 [An Anthology of Translation Theory], ed. By Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), pp. 1-19; Liu Jingzhi 劉靖之, 'Zhong Shengsi Buzhong Xingsi: Yan Fu Yilai De Fanyi Lilun' 重神似不重形似：嚴復以來的翻譯理論 [Emphasis on Spiritual Resemblance rather than Formal Resemblance: Translation Theory since Yan Fu], in *Essays on Translation* = 翻譯論集, ed. by Liu Jingzhi 劉靖之 (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1981), pp. 1-15. In these two widely read anthologies on Chinese translation theory, it is evident that his *xin-da-ya* principles are a frequent subject of discussion. Xu Jun, paying homage to Yan Fu in the centennial of his release of the *xin-da-ya* principles, briefly claims that 'it would be an extravagant hope to be able to get newer awareness, understanding and interpretation of Yan Fu's thinking on translation', the shaping of which represents a leap 'from intuition to self consciousness to self discipline', 'from experience to reason to science' and 'from skill to art to *dao*'. But in Xu's one-paragraph discussion of the last claim, the meaning of *dao* remains unexplained, apart from obscure expressions like 'the macro command of the profound task of translation' or 'leaving the skill level for the realm of translation as an art', and asserting that 'Yan's *xin-da-ya* trinity, with *da* and *ya* enveloped in *xin* as the basis, is the positive result of his pursuit of the *dao* of translation.' Xu Jun 許鈞, 'Zai Jicheng Zhong Fazhan' 在繼承中發展 [Developing While Inheriting], *Chinese Translators'*

another, arguing for or against its validity or offering expansion or qualification to the principles.<sup>19</sup>

The overwhelming consensus about Yan Fu's translational concern and political stance mentioned above, however, has preempted more productive syncretism of perspectives from both fields. The perception that his translation was primarily utilitarian tends to dwarf the credibility of his idealized translation principles.

Research in intellectual history does not see the relevance of Yan's translation principles to his accomplishment as an extraordinary thinker. Research in translated literature, on the other hand, has tended to be confined to literary and linguistic issues, a problem best summarized perhaps in the following view by Hu Shi. In his account of the development of Chinese literature from the 1870s to the 1920s, Hu discusses Yan's translated literature from an isolated angle. After praising Yan Fu as the first person to introduce modern Western thought to China and the first translator to succeed in convincing his Sinocentric readers of the need to emulate the West, he remarks that 'this belongs to the realm of intellectual history and we need not talk about it' and goes on to discuss in general terms Yan's translation principles and his

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*Journal* = 中國翻譯, 2 (1998), 4-5; my translation.

<sup>19</sup> In his topical study of the *xin-da-ya* principles as translation standards in commemoration of the centennial of their release in 'General Remarks on Translation' of *Tianyanlun*, Yan Fu's first extended translation, Shen Suru outlines past critiques and concludes that the study of the three principles constitutes the mainstream in Chinese translation studies. Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋, in his foreword to Su's work, even suggests that the three principles, being highly cryptic and ductile, always allow grounds to manoeuvre and will be an evergreen subject in Chinese translation studies. Shen Suru 沈蘇儒, *Lun Xin, Da, Ya: Yan Fu Fanyi Lilun Yanjiu* 《論信達雅—嚴復翻譯理論研究》 [On *Xin, Da, Ya*: Study on Yan Fu's Translation Theory] (Beijing: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 1998). See also Fan Shouyi, 'Ever Since Yan Fu and His Criteria of Translation', in *Translation: Theory and Practice, Tension and Interdependence*, ed. by Mildred L. Larson (Binghamton: State University of New York,



use of classical Chinese in translation.<sup>20</sup> This isolated perspective is not uncommon for studies concerning Yan's translation theory.

Besides, the reduction of Yan Fu to a mercurial or even opportunistic persona who renounced his radical Westernized outlook for a reactionary Confucian stance in his late years has resulted in underestimation of his intellectual and translation achievement. The representation of Yan as a transitional thinker torn between conventional values and half-digested foreign ideas with a contingent approach to translation (that is, often adjusting and at times distorting the original) brings the misconception that, in the final analysis, despite so much discussion in the past century, his practice sheds little light on 'the standard' mode of translation operation. Research into his translation principles, especially, seems to have reached a cul-de-sac. The recurring interpretation of his translation principles as a set of prescriptive or idealized guidelines for translation practitioners tends to restrict them to the scope of a contingency measure or a locally applied theory. Apart from increasing dissatisfaction with absolute standards, some researchers challenge the usefulness of existing studies about *xin-da-ya*, which they consider as having turned round the wheel, lacking in depth and dimension.<sup>21</sup> There is even concern that as a result of past prescriptive

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1991), pp. 63-70.

<sup>20</sup> Hu Shi 胡適, 'Wushinian Lai Zhongguo Zhi Wenxue' 五十年來中國之文學 [Chinese Literature over the Past Fifty Years], in *Hu Shi Wencun* 胡適文存 [Essays by Hu Shi], 4 vols. (Taipei: Yuandong Tushu Gongsi 遠東圖書公司, 1979; first publ. 1922), II, pp. 180-260 (pp. 194-96).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Huang Xuanfan 黃宣範, *Fanyi Yu Yuyi Zhijian* 翻譯與語意之間 [Between Translation and Semantic Meaning] (Taipei: Jinglian 經聯, 1976); Zhou Zhaoxiang 周兆祥, 'Fanyi De Biaozhun Yu Zhunze' 翻譯的標準與準則 [Standards and Norms of Translation], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 3 (1986), 46-50; Tan, Zaixi 譚載喜, 'Bixu Jianli Fanyixue' 必須建立翻譯學 [The Necessity of Establishing Translation as a Discipline], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 3 (1987), 2-7.

orientations, the development of translation studies in China lags far behind that of the Western world.<sup>22</sup>

This thesis does not intend to make excessive claims for Yan Fu or his translation principles, since values and trends are bound to change with the times. Instead it seeks to reveal the remarkable potentialities of Yan Fu's thinking, his translation principles being an integral part thereof, and more importantly, to explore their implication for modern Chinese culture by combining newer perspectives from the fields of intellectual history and translated literature. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Chinese translation tradition, highlighting principles and mechanisms that persisted in the time of Yan Fu. Critical analysis shows that translation was a function of power conversion and rivalry between hegemonic China and its Other. Translation functioned as a tool for higher intellectual and cosmological pursuits, and for the higher end of regenerating the Confucian-based Chinese system.

In chapter 2, attempts will be made to sketch the 'life world' of Yan Fu by assembling recent thinking about his intellectual development. There is increasing recognition of Yan Fu as a consistent seeker of the *dao*, that he had all along held an eclectic attitude towards Confucianism and Western ideas and preferred gradual moral-political reform through education, which led him to oppose unconditional departure with traditional ideologies after the fall of the last dynasty in China. It is believed that Yan's early attack on institutional Confucianism represented an early endeavour in modern China to reform the *dao*, to reinvent (rather than abandon) the Chinese

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<sup>22</sup> The most relentless attack probably comes from Wang Dongfeng 王東風, 'Zhongguo Fanyi Yanjiu: Shijimo De Sikao' 中國翻譯研究：世紀末的思考 [Chinese Translation Studies: Century-end

tradition to adapt to the modern world by grafting useful elements from the West. There is a view that Yan had been gravely misread by his radical contemporaries and then persistently misrepresented due to political and ideological biases in China especially before the 1980s. It is even suggested that the seismic socio-political and ideological trends that hampered development in China for the greater part of the past century might have been prevented if his progressive evolutionary view of gradual and orderly reform had been better appreciated by his contemporaries and as such, more in-depth study about Yan Fu will shed light on the issue of inheritance and renovation of Chinese culture.

The acknowledgement of this further dimension to Yan Fu's intellectual achievement allows this present study to reflect on his translation theory and practice set against the broader literary, cultural, socio-political and cosmological traditions of Confucian China in a period of transition to modernity under foreign aggression. In chapter 3, close textual studies will be conducted on Yan's first and most influential translation, *Tianyanlun*, to affirm an emerging view that his major goal of translation was to point out a new *dao* that would facilitate China's survival in a new world order, and his major concern was cosmological transcendence. His translation was more an intellectual critique of the cosmic process and social evolution rather than a close identity of the source text. Instead of merely demonstrating the discrepancies between the source and target texts, attempts will be made to show his creation of a highly influential and regenerative hybridized discourse when manoeuvring between the Chinese and Western conceptual grids.



Chapter 4 offers a broader perspective on Yan Fu's translation operation. He began translation as a higher learning pursuit, as a self-cultivation exercise for the sake of oneself and one's neighbours. Yan's writings, his introductory remarks on his translations and his exchanges with contemporaries will be analyzed in detail to reveal the fundamental Confucian values that steered his faith and his moral, political and literary pursuits throughout his life as a narrator of the Confucian tradition. Attempts will also be made to explain his choice of Confucian poetics, which was later abandoned during an ensuing socio-political crisis that rendered his views obsolete. Yan Fu's translation will be read as an act of engaging the source text in a dialogue, whereby the interaction of time and tradition-bound discourses obliges the translator to repeatedly highlight and transcend his own interpretive horizons and move the text beyond its original psychological and historical contexts, evincing multiple acceptable interpretations and dynamic interaction with the reader.

In chapter 5, Yan Fu's *xin-da-ya* translation principles will be interpreted against the Confucian literary and exegetical tradition, in which the universe of discourse of different classics are cross-mapped and expanded through the exegete's eisegetical and existential interpretation. His principles will be analyzed as Confucian literary coordinates rather than pure literary notions, which serve to clarify the nature of translation as being a tool to a (higher) end. The concepts of *xin*, *da* and *ya* will be related back to their respective sources in the Confucian canon, the *Classic of Changes*, *Analects* and *Zuo's Commentary of Spring and Autumn Annals*, engendering a hermeneutical circle, which discloses that Yan's translation follows the same standards as any act of Confucian literature and thus moral-political speech act – faith, decorum and virtue. This serves to valorize translation as a virtuous act of



conduct in the Chinese tradition and as cosmological transference of pure concepts and images in human's endeavour to understanding truth and being.

It is hoped that this multi-dimensional explication of Yan Fu's cross-cultural mediation and translation principles will expand the scope and research methodology of studies about individual translators or translation theories. It is also hoped that the present case study of one of the most productive and regenerative topics in Chinese translation studies can provide insight to the universal study of translation, as a basic human activity, and testify to the interdisciplinary nature and philosophical extension of translation studies as a discipline in its own right.

# Chapter 1

## Translation as Power Conversion: The Assimilative and Regenerating Chinese Tradition

‘I have heard of the Chinese converting barbarians to their ways, but not of their being converted to barbarian ways.’<sup>1</sup>

The above assertion by Mencius can be seen as typifying China’s attitude toward its Other until the late nineteenth century, a Sinocentric approach to cultural conversion entailing an asymmetrical relationship between the Chinese and its ‘barbarian’ Other. The Chinese way dominated this power dynamics, domineering peripheral cultures and turning neighbouring kingdoms into tributary states. The periphery was gauged against Chinese values and institutions and subjugated to the latter’s standards. In the tug of war between the centre and the periphery, however, assimilation turns out to be bilateral, for as the Other was drawn to the hegemonic centre and absorbed, the latter also became gradually corrupted. Thus although the central course continued to flow and the Other returned to the periphery, ‘one cannot step twice into the same river’, as Heraclitus told us.<sup>2</sup> Both water and the person cease to be the same. The more peripheries a centre has, the broader its extension and the richer its density and intensity.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from D.C. Lau (trans.), *Mencius* (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 103. Mencius (孟子) (c. 372 - c. 289 BC), often considered to be the greatest transmitter of Confucius’ teachings, was a venerable Confucian master in his own right. James Legge’s translation runs, ‘I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land to change barbarians, but I have never yet heard of any being changed by barbarians.’ Quoted from James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese/English Four Books* = 漢英四書 (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1992), p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus. An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 166.

Mencius' descendants had witnessed Chinese culture remain relatively homogeneous while being extended and regenerated through amalgamated conversion of its less cultivated Other, primarily through translation. By the time of Yan Fu, however, the former asymmetrical relationship was reversed at the height of Western imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century and there was a threat of the Chinese being converted to barbarian ways. It is often said that Yan's translation of modern Western intellectual works was representative of the third translation pinnacle in Chinese history, and that his thinking on translation embodied the heritage of the Chinese translation tradition.<sup>3</sup> A journey through the first two translation climatic periods in China in this chapter reveals how Confucian ideology and translation realities shaped cultural conversion and power dynamics between China and its Other and had a bearing on thinking about the role and function of translation and the translator. Certain new findings in this background study are important to rereading Yan Fu's translation operation in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>3</sup> On the history of translation in China, see Chen Fukang 陳福康, *Zhongguo Yixue Lilun Shigao* 中國譯學理論史稿 [A History of Chinese Translation Theory] (Shanghai: Waiyu Jiaoyu Chubanshe 外語教育出版社, 1992); Ma Zuyi 馬祖毅, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi – Wusi Yiqian Bufan* 中國翻譯簡史 – 五四以前部分 [A Concise History of Translation in China: Before the May Fourth Movement] (Beijing: Zhongguo Duiwai Fanyi Chuban Gongsi 中國對外翻譯出版公司, 1984). For a brief outline, see Eva Hung and David Pollard, 'Chinese Tradition', in Mona Baker (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 365-376; Ma Zuyi, 'History of Translation in China', in Chan Sin-wai and David E. Pollard (eds.), *An Encyclopaedia of Translation. Chinese-English. English-Chinese* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), pp. 373-387; Liu Miqing, 'Translation Theory from/into Chinese', Chan Sin-wai and David E. Pollard (eds.), *An Encyclopaedia of Translation. Chinese-English. English-Chinese* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), pp.1029-1047; 'History of Translation: China', in Chan Sin-wai (ed.) *A Topical Bibliography of Translation and Interpretation, Chinese-English. English-Chinese* (Hong Kong: Chinese University



André Lefevere highlights China and Greece as ancient cultures that regarded themselves high above their Other, showing little interest in translating weaker cultural systems and thus developed scanty thinking on translation.<sup>4</sup> This is true, because China had for millennia considered itself the centre of the known world it inhabited and called itself ‘All under Heaven’ (天下) or the ‘Middle Kingdom’ (中國), labels that bear similarity to the Greek term *oikoumene*.<sup>5</sup> Boasting one of the four oldest civilisations in the world, China had a long history of being a unified feudal state with a uniform writing system, codified law and standards, extended military and literary feats and a predominantly Confucian superstructure.<sup>6</sup> Chinese history was chequered by the rise and fall of dynasties primarily presided over by rulers of Han descent, and even in the periods when the central authority rested in the hands of minor nationalities, the ‘barbarian’ conquerors would often assimilate into the culture of the Central Plain, partly for mollification, partly out of respect.<sup>7</sup> There was little

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Press, 1995), pp. 159-162.

<sup>4</sup> André Lefevere, ‘Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation’, in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp. 12-24 (p. 13).

<sup>5</sup> Julia Chang, *Chinese Religions* (London: Macmillan, 1993), p.1.

<sup>6</sup> Kingship and systematic social hierarchical order could be traced back to the ancient kingdom of Xia 夏 (c. 21C – c. 16C BC). Writing, laws, measures and systems of different states were standardized under the Qin Empire 秦 (221-207BC). As early as the Han Dynasty 漢 (206BC-AD220), there was already a strong and unified feudal system with consolidated central government, a paid bureaucracy, taxation on farming products, extravagant military conquest, the institutionalization of Confucianism as the official school of thought and as the basis of what was to become a millennia-old civil service examination system. Proud of their Han descent, the Chinese have all along called themselves Han people 漢人, to differentiate themselves from barbarian invaders and minor nationalities. The Tang 唐 (618-907) and Song 宋 (960-1279) Dynasties also represented golden eras of national strength and cultural excellence.

<sup>7</sup> In the Period of Disunion after the fall of the Han Dynasty, for instance, Turkic, Mongol and Tibetan nomads battled for control of the area north of the Yangtze River. But the ordeal of governing a

need to borrow from peripheral literate cultures.

But China was unlike the ancient Mediterranean power, which became gradually displaced by the Romans, converted to Christianity and witnessed subsequent challenges of Islam from the east and of the heathen tribes from the north and north-west which developed into independent nation states. The Middle Kingdom remained a cultural and military giant with highly organized institutions over a vast stretch of self-contained land separated from adjacent nations.<sup>8</sup> Recognisable peripheries off the centre were simply labelled as 'the East' (such as Japan) or 'the West' (such as India and later, Europe and America).<sup>9</sup> It is suggested that culturally speaking, ancient China could be better seen as a complete civilization comparable to Western Christendom, within which European nation-states shared and esteemed a

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massive civilized agrarian society, among other reasons, caused quick Sinicization of the transient barbarian regimes in terms of government, culture, intermarriage and other trappings, so much so that some of them came close to losing their ethnic identity. The Mongol rulers of the Yuan Dynasty 元 (1271-1368) were perhaps the only exception who did not become fully sinicized (a possible reason why it was a short-lived empire) though they allowed free development of Chinese culture and learning. The Manchu court of the Qing Dynasty 清 (1644-1911) were able to retain long-term power largely because they preserved the social, cultural and political order of imperial Confucianism.

<sup>8</sup> Typographically China is sea-locked all along the north-east to the south-east and land-locked in almost all other directions, with the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas to the south-west, the Tian Shan Mountain Ranges to the north-west and the Gobi desert to the north.

<sup>9</sup> It is noted that the broad labelling of Europe, America, Africa or even Asia Minor as a categorical 'West' is simplistic. But the contradistinction between China and its Other has had a long history and even today, Europe and America are often jointly referred to as the West and Japan, the East. This situation was especially valid in the days of Yan Fu who, as Schwartz points out, seemed unconcerned with the national differences that trouble the West and showed the same indiscernment about Britain and Europe, or about a foreign author and his country as a whole. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. xv.



common European culture.<sup>10</sup> The multicultural nationalities in ancient China tended to be more homogeneous than their European counterparts, conceivably so because they shared a common written code, looked up to the same Confucian culture and establishments of the Central Plain and submitted to the assumed deity of the Chinese king which roamed almost unchecked by any religious or secular institution.<sup>11</sup>

Evidence of translation activities can be traced back to the eleventh century BC, mainly concerning interpreting and diplomacy between different nationalities.

Translators were called ‘tongue-men’ 舌人 or ‘imitating officers’ 象胥, representing a ‘petty’ activity which the great Chinese thinker Confucius 孔子 (551-479 BC) discouraged his king from venturing upon.<sup>12</sup> This was to become a lingering conception of translation being a secondary activity and profession, even in the time of Yan Fu, when the activity itself became popular and serviceable. Modern scholar Liang Qichao claims that the first foreign texts to be accepted with modesty

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<sup>10</sup> It is not unreasonable to view the nations of Europe belonging to the same tradition and hence working with the same general principles. This can be reflected, for example, in the title of many anthologies, which label themselves as ‘History of the West’, ‘Western Literary Theory’ and ‘Western Translation Theory’. There is no great difficulty tracing a ‘European’ or ‘Western’ history evolving through ideological eras such as the Dark Ages, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism and so on. See John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1992), p. 45; Federick M. Renner, *Interpretatio: Language and Translation from Cicero to Tytler* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989); L. G. Kelly, *The True Interpreter: A History of Translation Theory and Practice in the West* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979).

<sup>11</sup> Starting from the Zhou Dynasty 周 (c. eleventh century – 221 BC), rulers claimed that their right to rule descended directly from heaven 天 and called themselves ‘Son of Heaven’ 天子 or ‘High Lord’ 帝. Any family that was morally worthy could be bestowed upon the ‘Heavenly Mandate’ 天命. Periphery states had to be assimilated into the culture of the ‘Heavenly Empire’ 天朝 or ‘Supreme State’ 上國.



were Buddhist sutras since the source Indian culture then was considered 'comparable' to Han culture.<sup>13</sup> The translation of Buddhist sutras from the third to the seventh century heightened the development of Buddhism in China while the religion gradually waned in its fountainhead India.<sup>14</sup> This Other was converted, absorbed and regenerated as a new primary force in the target system, just as Hellenic culture was assimilated into Roman and Western culture.

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<sup>12</sup> Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>13</sup> See Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Zhongguo Fojiao Yanjiushi* 中國佛教研究史 [History of Chinese Buddhist Studies] (Shanghai: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1988; first publ. 1920-24), p. 85. Buddhism sprang up in ancient India in about the sixth to fifth century BC. The Mauryan (c. 322-185 BC) and Gupta (AD 320-520) Empires were periods of political stability with flourishing arts and literature. The Gupta era was in fact known as the 'Classical Age' of ancient India, during which a lot of Buddhist scriptures were introduced to China. Starting from the reign of Mauryan King Asoka (c. 270-232 BC), Buddhism was regarded as a 'civilizational religion', associated with a sophisticated high culture. It transcended the boundaries of other local religions and politics and flourished beyond India. See Frank E. Reynolds and Charles Hallisey, 'Buddhist Religion, Culture, and Civilization', in J. M. Kitagawa and M. D. Cummings (eds.), *Buddhism and Asian History* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 3-28 (8-14).

<sup>14</sup> It is estimated that in AD 25-713, there were 176 translators, 2278 titles and 7046 volumes (968 titles and 4507 volumes excluding lost, fake and retranslated versions) and in AD 67-1285, there were 194 translators, 1335 titles and 5396 volumes. See Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Foxue Yanjiu Shiba Pian* 佛學研究十八篇 [Eighteen Essays on Buddhist Studies] (Shenyang: Liaoning Jiaoyu Chubanshe 遼寧教育出版社, 1998; first publ. 1920-24), pp. 171-73. For an overview of scriptural translation in China, see Chen Fukang, pp. 14-51; Ma Zuyi, *ibid*, pp. 13-84; Delisle and Woodsworth, pp. 182-84. For the development of Buddhism and related translation in China, see Julia Chang, *Chinese Religions*; Arthur F. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990); Erik Zürcher, 'Buddhism in China', in Kitagawa and Cummings, pp. 139-50; Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Han Wei Liangjin Nanbeichao Fojiaoshi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 [A History of Buddhism of the Han, Wei, Jin and North and South Dynasties] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 1997; first publ. 1938); Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, *Fojiaoshi* 佛教史 [History of Buddhism] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 1991); Fang Litian 方立天, *Zhongguo Fojiao Yu Chuantong Wenhua* 中國佛教與傳統文化 [Chinese Buddhism and Traditional Culture] (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1998).

But Liang was probably not aware that the Chinese began to recognize their opposite number only after they had acculturated the extraneous faith. Buddhism probably found its way into China along the Silk Road as early as the first century AD, but translation of sutras did not begin until the later decades of the Han Dynasty in the second century when the eclipse of the Han Empire, like the Roman Empire, was accompanied by barbarism and a foreign religion.<sup>15</sup> The revival of religious Daoism over Confucian classical studies created an intellectual milieu more inclined to the acceptance of alternative ways of escape. A study of early-translated scriptures suggests that Chinese neophytes were less interested in Buddhist creeds than in practices leading to salvation.<sup>16</sup> The promise of self-liberation and universal enlightenment ran parallel to Daoist precepts on spiritual cultivation and Confucian credos on moral cultivation.<sup>17</sup> Buddhist thought germinated on Chinese soil through

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<sup>15</sup> Invasion by the *xiongnu* 匈奴, or Turkic nomads to the north-west, threatened the authority of the Han throne.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur F. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Buddhist doctrines, multifarious as they are, are primarily divided into two branches: the *Hinayana* or Smaller Vehicle 小乘 and the *Mahayana* or Greater Vehicle 大乘. The former teaches that enlightenment or salvation is difficult to attain and impossible outside monastic life and is still dominant in Southeast Asia. The latter teaches that enlightenment or salvation is universally accessible and was dominant in China, from whence it spread to Korea, Vietnam and Japan. See Julia Chang, *ibid*, p. 123. Central to Chinese Buddhism is the faith that salvation is open to all and can be self-acquired. A sentient being can become a *buddha* 佛 [Enlightened One] having attained the intelligence of *bodhi* 覺 [Supreme Enlightenment] and the state of *nirvana* 涅槃 [extinction of desire and individual consciousness] and is free from *karma* 業 [causality; deeds leading to suffering and reincarnation] through good deeds and spiritual cultivation towards *prajna* 般若 [knowledge of the Absolute Truth]. See Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. by Derk Bodde, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973; first publ. 1953), II, 237-84. In a similar vein, Daoism and Confucianism teach that all men are capable of attaining truth or the way (*dao*) 道, transcending the material world and living in harmony with nature or the universe. The Daoist role model is the 'immortal saint' 聖仙, a person in harmony with nature transcending life and death, while the Confucian model is the 'sage-king' 聖王, a person who simultaneously possesses the virtue of a sage and the accomplishment



analogy 格義 with the target culture.<sup>18</sup> Analogy to Confucianism was also employed. There is evidence that the earliest translations of Buddhist sutras were strongly influenced by Confucianism.<sup>19</sup>

Adaptation to Daoist cosmology and terminology was especially notable, since both systems were coincidentally similar in terms of metaphysical propensities with a language of negation, so much so that early Daoists failed to see any fundamental difference between the incoming religion and their own faith.<sup>20</sup> In fact acculturation

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of a worldly king.

<sup>18</sup> This is called 'conceptual matching' in K. K. Sin and Derek Roebuck, 'Language Engineering for Legal Transplantation: Conceptual Problems in Creating Common Law Chinese', *Language and Communication: an Interdisciplinary Journal*, 16.3 (1996), 235-54 (p. 248). One example is the incorporation of Chinese myths in imported sutras. For instance, in the *Sutra of the Four Regions of Mount Sumeru* 須彌四域經, legendary Chinese semi-divine beings Fu Xi 伏羲 and Nü Wa 女媧 were portrayed as *bodhisattvas* with a Chinese name – Yingsheng 應聲 [echo] and Jixiang 吉祥 [luck] respectively. See Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), p. 318.

<sup>19</sup> An example is the deletion or dilution of discourses suggestive of overt relationships between men and women: the 'vulgarity' of Sanskrit expressions for 'embrace' and 'kiss' was masked in transliteration so as not to contravene Confucian ethics. See Hajimi Nakamura, 'The Influence of Confucian Ethics on the Chinese Translations of Buddhist Sutras', *Sino-Indian Studies*, V, 3 & 4 (1957), 156-70. Another example is Kang Senghui 康僧會, AD third century Sogdian monk born on Chinese territory, borrowing Daoist and Confucian ideas to interpret Buddhist concepts. He explained the Buddhist abstraction of *karma* using Confucian rhetoric on retribution and defended his religion by claiming Buddhist abstruseness as complementary to Confucian teachings. See Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>20</sup> As recorded in *Houhanshu* 後漢書 [Chronicles of the Later Han Dynasty], it was thought that Buddhism belonged to the same stream of other-worldly Daoist doctrines. See Fung Yu-lan, *ibid*, II, p. 240. For instance, the Buddhist term *nirvana* was first translated into the Daoist loan term *wuwei* 無爲 [non-action]; it is now generally transliterated as *niepan* 涅槃. Another example is the use of the Daoist term *dao* to represent *dharma* 法 [religious and moral law governing individual conduct and the ends of life] or the idea of enlightenment. See Julia Chang, *Chinese Religions*, p. 126; Lü Cheng 呂澂, *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji* 呂澂佛學論著選集 [Selected Works on Buddhism by Lü Cheng],



was so extensive that there arose a late-second-century tale that Buddhism was a Daoist extension across the border.<sup>21</sup> This provided a mutually beneficial pretext for Daoism to lay claim to an incoming practice, and for Buddhism to establish authority by building ties with the founder of an indigenous faith, representing a subtle power struggle. Revered Buddhist scholar Lü Cheng stresses that interaction is essentially bi-directional and suggests that Daoist metaphysics might be influenced by Buddhist doctrines, though Daoists would not acknowledge this due to the long-held contradistinction between Chinese and the barbarian Other.<sup>22</sup> The trend of analogizing, sinicizing or downright obscuring at the early phase of introduction of an exotic source reflects the inherent hegemony of Chinese culture over the Other, which was to recur later in the translation of Western religious, scientific and intellectual works.

The earliest translations were mostly literal, first interpreted by foreign missionaries

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5 vols. (Jinan: Qilu Shushe 齊魯書社, 1991), V, p. 2437. It is pointed out that Parthamasiris 安世高, who started the first major scriptural translation exercise in China in 148, largely employed Daoist analogy. (He was a Parthian monk who worked mainly in southern China, the spring of Laozi thought.) For instance, he translated *sunya* [emptiness] into the Daoist loan word *wu* 無 [non-being]; it is now usually translated as *kong* 空 [emptiness]. See Liang Xiaohong 梁曉虹, *Fojiao Ciyu De Gouzao Yu Hanyu Cihui De Fazhan* 佛教詞語的構造與漢語詞匯的發展 [Structure of Buddhist Lexis and Development of Chinese Lexicon] (Beijing: Beijing Yuyan Xueyuan Chubanshe 北京語言學院出版社, 1994), p. 69; Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, p. 28; Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo Fojiao Yanjiu Shi*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>21</sup> This was called the theory of *huahu* 化胡 [convert barbarians], which alleged that Laozi, first Daoist sage, exiled himself in his later years to western territories to educate the barbarians. See Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 288-320.

<sup>22</sup> Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1869-1989) explains that Daoist metaphysics began with the reinterpretation of Confucian classics based on Daoist doctrines after the Han Dynasty and observes that the interpretation of the *Classic of Changes* by representative Daoist metaphysician Wang Bi 王弼 (AD 226-249) shows the influence of the Buddhist doctrine of *prajna*. Lü Cheng, *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji*, V,

into inadequate Chinese and then recorded by Chinese converts without sufficient grasp of the source system.<sup>23</sup> Earlier texts were often oral accounts or translations from across the western boarder, broadly catergorized as *hu* 胡 [barbarian] texts, themselves translated from Sanskrit sources. Some translators produced commentary translation or combined translation of several texts to explain the doctrines more clearly. Direct translations from Pali and Sanskrit gradually increased, especially when Buddhism reached its apogee in the sixth to seventh century causing pressing need for authenticity. The intellectual, philosophical and elitist bent of what Erik Zürcher refers to as ‘gentry Buddhism’ also necessitated intensive study of doctrines.<sup>24</sup> A recurrent theme in discursive remarks on translation strategy was the seeming dichotomy between *wen* 文 [culture or accomplishment] and *zhi* 質 [nature or solid qualities], whether literalism would preserve the canon more faithfully, and the most important discussions show the influence of Chinese poetics.<sup>25</sup> Lokaksema

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pp. 2484-86.

<sup>23</sup> The Buddhist monks, who came from the southwest, were mainly Parthians, Scythians, Sogdians, Kushans and some Indians.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Gentry’ refers to the cultured upper class in medieval Chinese society who as individuals had the opportunity to receive a traditional literary education which qualified them for an official career, or who belonged to a family of some wealth and standing which could afford to have its young male members engage in literary studies. Erik Zürcher highlights the formation of a wholly new type of Chinese intellectual elite consisting of the ‘cultured clergy’ not confined to the upper class but who, by a combination of Buddhist doctrine and traditional Chinese scholarship, were able to develop a particular type of Buddhist monastic culture highly attractive to the gentry and also to talented members of lower class families. It must be noted that the Chinese gentry class is a much broader term than its Western counterpart; it may range from rich landlord families to poor households. Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 4-9, 71-75; Fairbank and Goldman, pp. 101-07.

<sup>25</sup> Confucius says that the true gentleman must show a dovetailed balance between both *wen* and *zhi*. Legge translates *wen* as ‘accomplishments’ and Waley translates it as ‘ornamentation’, noting that ornamentation refers to ‘culture’.

The Master said, When natural substance (*zhi*) prevails over ornamentation (*wen*), you get the

支謙 (second to third century AD), for instance, in a debate on translation approach, had to concede in theory to supporters of literalism who cited Daoist and Confucian poetics highlighting the importance of sincere and unadorned writing over fluency, even though he practically adopted a more communicative approach.<sup>26</sup> Chinese monk Dao'an 道安 (AD 312-385) advocated a literal approach, sticking to the *ben* 本 [text] of the original sutra.<sup>27</sup> He discouraged pruning of repetitive Buddhist discourse, which he likened to impudent trimming of Confucian classics like the *Classic of*

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boorishness of the rustic. When ornamentation (*wen*) prevails over natural substance (*zhi*), you get the pedantry of the scribe. Only when ornament and substance are duly blended do you get the true gentleman.

D. C. Lau (trans.), *Confucius: The Analects* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 73.

According to the commentary by Liu Baonan, *wen* here also means *li* 禮 [propriety]. See Liu Baonan 劉寶楠, *Lunyu Zhengyi* 論語正義 [The Correct Meaning of *The Analects*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1990), p. 125.

<sup>26</sup> Chen Fukang, pp. 14-17. Contemporary literary critic and translator Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 (1910-1998) claims that Yan Fu's three principles of translation can be traced back to the discussion between Lokaksema and the literalists. Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書, 'Yishi Sannan' 譯事三難 [Three Difficulties in Translation], in *Fanyi Lunji* 翻譯論集 [An Anthology of Translation Theory], ed. by Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), p. 23. Lü Cheng's studies show that Lokaksema, Indo-Scythian monk born on Chinese territory, sometimes attempted commentary translation and combined translation of various texts. See Lü Cheng, *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji*, V, p. 2879.

<sup>27</sup> Chen Fukang, pp. 17-24. Many contemporary critics follow Luo Xinzhang's view that Yan Fu's principle of *xin* or faithfulness develops from Dao'an's conception of *ben*, which Luo interprets as original purport. Luo Xinzhang, 'Woguo Zicheng Tixi De Fanyi Lilun' 我國自成體系的翻譯理論 [Chinese Translation Theory: A System of Our Own], in *Fanyi Lunji* 翻譯論集 [An Anthology of Translation Theory], ed. by Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), pp. 1-19. But I agree with Zhu Zhiyu's argument that *ben* should mean the surface structure of the source text and is different from Yan's notion of *xin*, which primarily concerns meaning. It is because Dao'an insisted on conforming to source language grammar and word order, though he was against cribs. Zhu Zhiyu 'Lun Zhongguo Fojin Fanyi Lilun: "Wenzhi" Suo' 論中國佛經翻譯理論：「文質」說 [On the Theories of Translation of Buddhist Scriptures into Chinese], *Translation Quarterly* = 翻譯季刊, 7/8 (1998), 95-118.



*Songs* and the *Classic of History*. He also denounced freer translations, such as those by Lokaksema, as unfaithful, citing parables from Daoist classic *Zhuangzi*.

Kumaarajiva 鳩摩羅什 (AD 334-413), Kuchan monk conversant in Chinese and Indian languages, was known for his idiomatic Chinese and coherent terminology that made it possible to transmit Buddhist ideas more clearly than his predecessors, avoiding Daoist allusion.<sup>28</sup>

It is generally held that Xuanzang 玄奘 (AD 602-664) represented the paragon of scriptural translation, striking an optimal balance between literal and free approaches in his production of the most ‘faithful’ versions in a repertoire called ‘new translation’.<sup>29</sup> His legendary pilgrimage firmly established his authority as the highest *tripitaka*, and his translations were indeed more systematic in terms of concept and expression.<sup>30</sup> However, Buddhist scholar Lü Cheng points out that the distinction between literal and free translation (that is, between *zhi* and *wen*) is wholly relative, if at all relevant, since Xuanzang’s alleged ‘faithful’ and ‘optimal’ rendering would appear plain and literal when compared to the freer translation of Kumaarajiva, but would look adorned and almost free when compared to the literal, almost crude

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<sup>28</sup> Noting that it was impossible to carry the stylistic differences across, Kumaarajiva compared the translation of Buddhist psalms to feeding someone with chewed rice, which was unsavoury and nauseating. Chen Fukang, pp. 24-27.

<sup>29</sup> This view began in the Tang Dynasty, and has been accepted almost without reservation in most translation anthologies.

<sup>30</sup> Xuanzang was best remembered for his pilgrimage to India bringing back six hundred and fifty-seven collections of Sanskrit sutras and commentaries in a caravan of twenty-two horses. Legend has it that during his odyssey, he converted distant people, impressed faraway kings, outwitted foreign monks, and even excelled in debates at the highest Buddhist institution of Naalanda 那爛陀寺. So he earned the designation of *tripitaka* 三藏 [three baskets], that is, master of sacred canons (*sutra pitaka*), monastic code (*vinaya pitaka*) and higher teachings (*abhidharma pitaka*).

rendering of Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (third to fourth century AD), Zhendi 真諦 (AD 499-569) and Yijing 義淨 (AD 635-713).<sup>31</sup> Lü finds that the Chinese master actually translated and amended past translations to conform to his own interpretation and his syncretism of varied Buddhist doctrines based primarily on his own sect, rather than some ‘objective’ truth embedded in ‘a’ source text.<sup>32</sup> He concludes that if Xuanzang was ‘faithful’ at all, he was faithful to his discretionary selection of the exegetical system of his own sect and its reconciliation with other sects and doctrines, which represented nevertheless his own ‘faithful’ conviction.<sup>33</sup> Fang Guangchang

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<sup>31</sup> In his comparison of four translations of *Guangsuoyuanshilun*, one by Zhendi, one by Xuanzang, one by Yijing, and one a Tibetan version, Lü Cheng finds Xuanzang’s rendering distinctive with more polished language. He also finds it broadly similar to the interpretation of Dharmapaala 護法 (c. mid 6<sup>th</sup> C), one of the masters at Naalanda, when contrasting it with the latter’s commentary. (Xuanzang and his disciple Kuiji 窺基 founded the Sect of Faxiang 法相 [Dharma-appearance] in China based on the doctrine of *vij~napti-maatrataa* 唯識 [Consciousness-only] as expounded by Dharmapaala.) Lü criticizes that later critics blindly believe that Xuanzang produced the most faithful rendering of Buddhist literature, a Tang Dynasty consensus which has yet to be verified. Lü Cheng, ‘Lun Zang Yi “Guangsuoyuanshilun” Zhi Tezheng’ 論奘譯“觀所緣釋論”之特徵 [On the Characteristics of Xuanzang’s Translation of ‘Guangsuoyuanshilun’], first publ. 1928, in *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji* 呂澂佛學論著選集 [Selected Works on Buddhism by Lü Cheng], 5 vols. (Jinan: Qilu Shushe 齊魯書社, 1991), I, pp. 51-62, I, pp. 51-62. Conversant in Chinese, English, Japanese, Sanskrit, Pali and Tibetan, Lü also conducts intertextual studies of Xuanzang’s translations together with other sources and translations. See *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji*, V, 2720-21, 2935-38.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. See also Lü Cheng, ‘Xuanzang Yu Yindu Fojiao’ 〈玄奘與印度佛教〉 [Xuanzang And Indian Buddhism], first publ. 1964, in *Lü Cheng Ji* 《呂澂集》 [An Anthology of Lü Cheng] (Beijing: Social Sciences Press (社會科學出版社), 1995), pp. 285-92; *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji*, pp. 2930-38. Xuanzang syncretised the various doctrines that he studied and discussed with Indic and Chinese masters and was especially influenced by certain *tripitaka* in Naalanda. He believed that Buddhist ‘sages’ had not laid down conflicting doctrines; later contradictions arose from failure to mediate. According to Lü, this preference for mediation is influenced by Dharmapaala.

<sup>33</sup> Gao Zhengnong supports Lü’s meticulous approach to study, though he also agrees that Xuanzang’s contribution to sutra translation was beyond par. Gao Zhenong 高振農, ‘Qiantan Lü Cheng Dui Xuanzang Fanyi De Pingjia’ 淺談呂澂對玄奘翻譯的評價 [Brief remarks on Lü Cheng’s Evaluation of Xuanzang’s Translation], 2000, in [http://www.hkbuddhist.org/magazine/487/487\\_12.html](http://www.hkbuddhist.org/magazine/487/487_12.html).



also finds that Xuanzang's translation consists of amendment and refinement of the source text.<sup>34</sup> This is hardly surprising, for the translation of canons usually involves intertextual study and hermeneutical interpretation. In the field of Buddhist studies, many scholars now believe that Xuanzang exercised a tendency to discretionary interpretation, favouring the newer interpretations he introduced directly from India but rejecting older Chinese interpretations, and a tendency to sectarianism, confining his teaching to his close disciples.<sup>35</sup>

It follows that the recurrent prescriptive approach in translation research toward Xuanzang, that his translations illustrate the golden principle of faithfulness to the source text, is misleading and unproductive. The issue of what constitutes 'faith' and the mediation of various doctrines in the translation of 'a' text is thought provoking

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<sup>34</sup> Fang, Guangchang 方廣錫 (ed.), *Banruoxinjing Zhuyi Yanjiu* 般若心經譯注研究 [A Study of Translations and Exegeses on *Prajnaparamita*] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> Examples are quoted from the canonical *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳 [A Biography of Venerable Monks] to show that Xuanzang appeared obstinate with his own interpretation and exercised favoritism with his chosen successor Kuiji. It is also pointed out that some contemporaries, some working in his translation house, disapproved of his sectarian criticism of older interpretations. See Lü Cheng, *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji*, V, 2720-21; Gao Zhenong 高振農, 'Shilun Tangdai Fodian Fanyi De Tedian' 試論唐代佛典翻譯的特點 [Preliminary Views on the Characteristics of Sutra Translation in the Tang Dynasty], in *Sui Tang Fojiao Yanjiu Lunwenji* 隋唐佛教研究論文集 [Collected Essays on Buddhist Studies of the Sui and Tang Dynasties], ed. by Sui Tang Fojiao Xueshu Taolunhui 隋唐佛教學術討論會 [Conference on Buddhist Studies of the Sui and Tang Dynasties] (Xi'an: Sanqin Chubanshe 三秦出版社, 1990), pp. 214-27; Fang Tianli, *ibid*; Pan Guiming 潘桂明, *Zhongguo Fojiao Baike Congshu. Zongji Juan* 中國佛教百科叢書·宗派卷 [Chinese Buddhism Encyclopaedic Series. Schools and Sects] (Taipei: Foguang Wenhua Shiye 佛光文化事業, 1999), pp. 242-80; Zhongguo Fojiao Xiehui 中國佛教協會 (eds.), *Zhongguo Fojiao* 中國佛教 [Chinese Buddhism], 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhishi Chubanshe 知識出版社, 1980), I, 292-303. It is said that Xuanzang accepted the suggestion of his favourite student Kuiji to combine, that is, 'adapt' all by himself the ten different doctrines of 'Consciousness-only' on the interpretation of *Dharmapaala*, instead of sticking to his original plan of letting a translation team do it. See Guo Peng 郭朋, *Zhongguo Fojiaoshi* 中國佛教史



and will be further examined in the case of Yan Fu, who was guided throughout by his Neo-Confucian faith to mediate between different systems of thought in his renovation of the *dao*. Faithfulness to ‘the’ original text, so far as these two greatest translators in Chinese history are concerned, does not seem to be an issue at all, contrary to the still prevalent view that prescribes ‘faithfulness’ as ‘identity’ to ‘a’ source text and limits it to the dualistic option of ‘word’ and ‘sense’ or of ‘literal’ and ‘free’ translation, notions which are not relevant at all to this kind of religious or metaphysical ‘faith’ under discussion. Actually the notion of ‘the original text’ itself is particularly misleading in the study of Buddhist sutras, for Buddhism began as an oral tradition and it was not until a few hundred years after the nirvana of Buddha (c.480BC) that his disciples collated his teachings in several large assemblies under royal patronage.<sup>36</sup> By the time of Xuanzang, Indian Buddhism was divided by doctrinal and sectarian differences while Chinese Buddhism showed a tendency to synthesis, with many sects attempting to reconcile their differences with other doctrines.<sup>37</sup> Chinese Buddhism cannot and ought not be the same as Indian Buddhism.

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[A History of Chinese Buddhism] (Taipei: Wenjin Chubanshe 文津出版社, 1993), pp. 175-83.

<sup>36</sup> At those assemblies, invited *bhikṣu* monks agreed to an authoritative interpretation of Buddha’s teachings. The organized doctrines were then recorded and passed on to different monks and monasteries, from where later evolved different sects and concomitant secondary literature. It is believed that Buddhist scriptures first appeared in Singhalese (an Indo-Iranian language) half a century before Christ. Ren Jiyu, *Fojiao Shi*, *ibid*, p. 52. Sutras were then translated into different regional dialects and disseminated abroad in four principal languages: Pali (a native tongue of Southwest India), Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan. See Delisle and Woodsworth, p. 187. In China, it was with the gradual institutionalization of Buddhism that concern was raised over the issue of edition and authenticity.

<sup>37</sup> This practice of assimilation was popular in ancient China and India. Fang Tianli remarks that following the unification of northern and southern practices after the Period of Disunion, individual sects of the Sui and Tang Dynasties developed their own complicated body of thought through *panjiao* 判教 [evaluation of faith], that is, comparative study of various sects as part and parcel of the larger Buddhist system but placing one’s own sect as paramount. This results in mutual assimilation, critical

Lü Cheng remarks that alteration through translation was inevitable as a result of earlier importation from *hu* translations and individual translators being influenced by the exegetical system of their own sect.<sup>38</sup> The reverend Zhaowei suggests that we need not be blindly obsessed by the notion of a ‘primary source’ and do line-to-line comparison of Chinese and Indian or Tibetan sutras, since the ‘source’ cannot always be ascertained; it can even be a hybrid evolved out of discursive editing and amendment.<sup>39</sup> The copious translation of sutras and secondary literature led to the composition of Chinese sutras and commentaries and even the founding of local sects, which claim ascendancy to true Buddhist faith.<sup>40</sup> Guo Peng observes that the deeper its Sinicization, the more likely a sect is to survive, for the founding of a sect requires ‘reformation’ while the translation of sutras requires ‘transformation’.<sup>41</sup>

Dao'an was among Xuanzang's predecessors to acknowledge that interpretation and

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evaluation of Indic doctrines and the development of local lineage. When Xuanzang was in India, he convinced many Indian masters to reconcile their mutual differences and facilitated the development of certain doctrines, especially that of the Yogaacara School 瑜伽行派 [Stillness of the Mind]. Fang Litian 方立天, *Zhongguo Fojiao Yanjiu* 中國佛教研究 [Studies on Chinese Buddhism], 2 vols. (Taipei: Xin Wenfeng Chubanshe 新文豐出版公司, 1993), I, pp. 57-81.

<sup>38</sup> Lü Cheng holds that Chinese Buddhism is a grafting rather than transplantation on Indian Buddhism, and the two are inevitably different, due to different world views and cultural development. For instance, Kumārajīva's teaching of certain Buddhist doctrines was different from or even absent in India, since he studied in Kuchin rather than India. Lü Cheng, *Lü Cheng Foxue Lunzhu Xuanji*, V, pp. 2496-50.

<sup>39</sup> Zhaohui 昭慧, ‘Miaoyunji Daodu’ 妙雲集導讀 [Guide to the Miaoyun Collection], in *Miaoxin Zazhi* 妙心雜誌 [Good Mind Buddhist Journal], 52 (2000).

<http://www.mst.org.tw/Magazine/Content-Index/No052w.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> In China, Buddhist thought has assimilated into indigenous culture to such an extent that it is now generally perceived to be more Chinese than Indian. Sects of a Chinese origin like Pure Land 淨土宗, Tiantai 天台宗 and Zen 禪宗 has a development of their own not only in China, but also in import countries like Japan and Korea.



translation poetics were inevitably tied to the times.<sup>42</sup> He even pointed out a worldly way to religion, realizing that the institutionalization of Buddhism depended on royal patronage.<sup>43</sup> The influence of Xuanzang was indeed boosted by the emperor's esteem for him, supporting lavish translation houses under his direction with specialized personnel for each stage of a ten-stage operation, including vetting, polishing, chronicling, intertextual and exegetical studies, standardization of terminology and amendment of past translations. His 'faithful' translation, consciously or otherwise, led to consolidation of the authority of his own sect. All these remind us that even for canonized texts, translation need not be an innocent, transparent activity, but as Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi hold, 'is highly charged with significance in every stage' and 'rarely involves a relationship of equality between texts, authors or systems.'<sup>44</sup>

It must be remembered that hegemonic acculturation of Buddhist texts only ceased after a few centuries of Sinicization and assimilation. But after Buddhism had become a mainstream intellectual pursuit, scholars became less tolerant with acculturation and obscure editions and initiated more in-depth theological and philological studies. As Lefevere remarks, the more central and canonical a text is to a culture, the more careful its translation will be to avoid subverting the core values and basis of the

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<sup>41</sup> Guo Peng, p. 176.

<sup>42</sup> Dao'an claimed in the preface to a translated sutra that it was difficult for translators to adapt past preaching to a later age since the saints preached according to the conventions of their time. Chen Fukang, p. 18.

<sup>43</sup> See Ren Jiyu, *Fojiao Shi*, p. 165. Besides being supported by the gentry and the rich, eminent monks made court acquaintances, took part in official translation projects and received an imperial stipend.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted from Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (eds.), *Post-Colonial Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.



larger culture.<sup>45</sup> Xuanzang was one of those missionaries who embarked on journeys to the West in search of authentic scriptures and canonical interpretation for their faith. His conviction that the Indian West showed the way to Buddhist faith can be compared to Yan Fu's conviction that the European West showed the way to knowledge in the modern world. Ironically still, some of the 'authentic' doctrines that Xuanzang introduced failed to fuse with indigenous thinking since they were too foreign.<sup>46</sup> As for Yan Fu, his attempt to fuse what he believed to be the best of modern Western thinking and traditional Chinese thinking through more comprehensible analogy has been grossly misunderstood and will be discussed in a later chapter.

Nevertheless Buddhism as a whole integrated with the Chinese system and attained primary status in the receiving end, giving rise to a separate cause of development in China while its source was eclipsed by other religions in its Indian fountainhead. By mid-Tang in the eight century, there was the 'blending of three teachings' 三教合

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted from Lefevere, *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.70.

If a text is considered to embody the core values of a culture, if it functions as that culture's central text, translations of it will be scrutinised with the greatest of care, since 'unacceptable' translations may well be seen to subvert the very basis of the culture itself.

The case of Thomas More (1477-1535) dismissing the translation of the Bible by William Tyndale (c.1490-1536) as heresy parallels Buddhist scholars' intolerance of 'inauthentic' sutras and creeds.

<sup>46</sup> The Faxiang Sect 法相宗, also called Consciousness-only 唯識 or Ci'en 慈恩 (named after the Grand Ci'en Temple where Xuanzang resided), that Xuanzang founded in China did not last more than forty years, since its inclination to Indian scholasticism and fundamentalism did not cater to the needs of the Chinese society, and its elite-based proselytism limited its popular base. Fang Litian, *ibid*, p. 80-81. It is interesting to note that these 'authentic' doctrines were in fact 'newer' interpretations emerging in India and introduced directly to China by Xuanzang, and were thus considered foreignized when compared with older, more Sinicized interpretations.

流 – Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism.<sup>47</sup> Yet it must be stressed that this ‘blending’ was in practice the syncretism of mutual rivalry and borrowing, with Confucianism remaining the state ideology.<sup>48</sup> The non-earthly ways of Buddhism and Daoism were adjusted to suit the more utilitarian way of Confucian ethics.<sup>49</sup> Confucianism, on the other hand, assimilated Buddhist and Daoist metaphysical notions and ways to spiritual cultivation to supplement its inherently earthly doctrines, leading to the Neo-Confucian movement starting from the twelfth century. This fascinating syncretism shapes what we today regard as Chinese thinking, but at times it is suggested that the overriding attention to conformity facilitated ideological manipulation by the ruling class and preempted China’s smooth transition from feudalism to capitalism.<sup>50</sup> Influence of the three teachings and criticism about the

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<sup>47</sup> See, for instance, Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, *Han Tang Fojiao Sixian Lunji* 漢唐佛教思想論集 [Essays on Buddhist Thought of the Han and Tang Dynasties] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1998; first publ. 1963), pp.288-307; Yang Dongchun 楊東純, *Zhongguo Xueshushi Jianghua* 中國學術史講話 [A History of Chinese Learning] (Beijing: Dongfang Chubanshe 東方出版社, 1996), pp.190-202; Fang, Litian, *Zhongguo Fojiao Yu Chuantong Wenhua*, pp. 298-318.

<sup>48</sup> At the centre of traditional Chinese cosmology was the way, or *dao*, to a stable and peaceful heavenly order, which was to be mirrored on earth through orderly human relationships and orderly governance. Confucius believed that the *dao* automatically prevails when everything goes in harmony and that man is immanently capable of transformation by instruction (*jiaohua*) 教化. Teaching and thinking were designed for the attainment of the *dao* and the union of man with heaven and earth. This is why Zürcher suggests that any teaching in ancient China was expected to be utilitarian, capable of effecting concrete and visible results in this world. Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, pp. 262-63.

<sup>49</sup> It is suggested that even pseudo-translations of Buddhist sutras after the seventh century bore a tinge of Confucian ethical and political values. Ren Jiyu, *Han Tang Fojiao Sixian Lunji*, p. 289.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, pp. 288-307. It must be pointed out that Confucianism prescribes an intricate labyrinth of social and moral codes in order to steer the individual through the phases and vicissitudes of human existence; it is indeed ironic that this goodwill should be exploited by the ruling class as ideological fetters. Fairbank and Goldman remark that the Chinese people had been able to maintain a highly civilized life even under poor conditions mainly because of highly systematized ethical norms and

shortcomings of Chinese thinking were to be largely evidenced in the writings and translations of Yan Fu.

The fact that the foreign origin of Buddhism was gradually erased in its assimilation into the Chinese system shows that systems are not equal after all. There seems to be a correlation between translation approach and the power differentials of the source and target systems. Nakamura suggests that Tibetan translations remained more literal than Chinese translations partly because Tibetan culture was less developed than Chinese culture at that time.<sup>51</sup> He may as well add that the Indian system enjoyed considerably more superior status in Tibet. From the very beginning, Tibetan translations came mainly from Sanskrit and Prakrit sources. The first Indian sutra introduced to Tibet by its first 'religious king' Srong-brtsan-sgam-po (c. AD 608-650) formed the basis of the Tibetan writing code. Tibetan translators working in collaboration with Indian scholars had high esteem for Sanskrit texts and were more ready to preserve unfamiliar elements. By the fourteenth century AD, the Tibetans had succeeded in translating all available Buddhist literature in India and Tibet; many Sanskrit texts that have since been lost in the country of their origin are known only from their Tibetan translations.<sup>52</sup> Newer texts that claimed to have been translated from an extinct Indian source without any 'older' texts available in an Indian version were simply excluded and branded as 'incorrect'.<sup>53</sup> Lefevere remarks that a higher

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social institutions, forming what Max Weber calls a 'familistic state', in which the individual automatically knows and is thus confined to where he stands in his family or society. Fairbank and Goldman, pp. 4-23.

<sup>51</sup> Nakamura, p. 169.

<sup>52</sup> Britannica.com on 'Tibetan Buddhism': <http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=74278>

<sup>53</sup> Herbert Guenther, 'Buddhism in Tibet', in *Buddhism and Asian History*, ed. by J. M. Kitagawa and M. D. Cummings (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 175-87.



culture is more reluctant to translate and when it does, it has a higher tendency than a low receiving culture to modify a source text, even when the source system also enjoys a high status, to suit its own cultural and literary taste.<sup>54</sup> We see the same trend with Chinese and even Japanese, as different from Tibetan, cultures.

Nakamura suggest that the sutras held in highest esteem in Japan were older translations with a strong Chinese colouring before the seventh century, and that the Buddhism which entered Japan was actually ‘Buddhism plus a small quantity of Confucianism’.<sup>55</sup> This proposition is not at all surprising, considering the influence of the colossal empire, from where its neighbouring tributary states drew cultural and literary inspiration. Buddhism spread from China to many Asian countries, for instance, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Singapore, where distinctively ‘Chinese’ schools of Buddhism were dominant and new forms were moulded on Chinese theological insights.<sup>56</sup> The Japanese first developed their writing system borrowing Chinese

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<sup>54</sup> Lefevere compares the relative translation approaches of the arrogant French and the down-to-earth Germans in translating Greek literature.

The French, who are much too proud of their own taste, adapt all things to it, rather than try to adapt themselves to the taste of another time. Homer must enter France a captive and dress according to their fashion, so as not to offend their eyes...But we poor Germans, who are still almost an audience without a fatherland, who are still without tyrants to dictate our taste, want to see him the way he is.

Lefevere, *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 74; my ellipses.

<sup>55</sup> Nakamura, p. 170.

<sup>56</sup> Buddhism was introduced to Korea in the fourth century AD together with other Chinese exports such as ideographic writing, philosophy, medicine, arts and social customs. It spread to Japan from the Paekche 百濟 kingdom of Korea in the mid-sixth century. Buddhism interacted with indigenous Shinto and other religions in Japan. The patron who played a formative role in the cause of Buddhism in Japan was Prince Shotoku (AD 574-622), who sent an envoy to the Chinese court bringing back valuable information about Chinese institutions and Chinese Buddhism. This prompted his alleged

characters in the sixth century. Starting from the high Tang Dynasty, the Japanese borrowed heavily from Chinese culture and literature through Korean teachers, and the 'superior' Chinese system had all along served as a model for the island kingdom which was then still in a primitive and preliterate stage.<sup>57</sup> Pre-Tang scriptural translation in China was relatively skewed to the target system and the Japanese, already accustomed to high Confucian values, may have perceived Buddhism and Confucianism as not contradictory to each other to any great extent and were thus happy to accept sinicized translations as authoritative.<sup>58</sup> Japan has a long history of assimilating foreign cultural and philosophical constructions in developing its own system.<sup>59</sup> It appears that the relatively lower and dependent status of Japanese culture vis-à-vis Chinese culture caused readiness to accept the Other through the more approximate and influential secondary Chinese source, to such an extent that it

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authorship of the so-called 'Seventeen-Article Constitution', a set of moral and governmental injunctions based largely on Confucian values mingled with Buddhist and Legalist elements, as well as commentaries on three important Mahayana sutras, with a tendency to adapt Buddhist ideas to the needs of practical life. See Tamaru Noriyoshi, 'Buddhism in Japan', in *Buddhism and Asian History*, ed. by J. M. Kitagawa and M. D. Cummings (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 159-73; Nan Huaijin 南懷瑾, *Zhongguo Fojiao Fazhanshi Lue* 中國佛教發展史略 [A Brief History of the Development of Chinese Buddhism] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe 復旦大學出版社, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> Burton Watson, 'Japanese Aids to Chinese-English Translation', in *The Art and Profession of Translation*, ed. by T. C. Lai (Hong Kong, 1975), p. 209-17 (p. 209).

<sup>58</sup> Sinicization was most developed in Japan in the Nara period (AD 710-784), when each of the six Nara sects represented a tradition of study of a particular text or exegetical system that flourished in contemporary Chinese capital Chang'an.

<sup>59</sup> Confucianism and Buddhism remained the two principal schools of Japanese thought until the Meiji Period (1868-1912), when the Japanese began to reform their country based on modern Western models. Ironically China, once a model for Japanese emulation, was to copy the Meiji model of Westernization in Yan Fu's time. Even today, Japanese industries are known for their 'fine-tuned' application of imported high-tech discoveries to their consumer products.

replaced the primary Indian source.<sup>60</sup>

No other foreign religion has fared as well as Buddhism in China. Islam, for instance, has only succeeded in becoming a non-proselytizing religion of the Arab and Persian minorities in northwest China without affecting the lives of the Han majority, though it is still considered one of the major religions in China.<sup>61</sup> Islam entered China possibly in the seventh century, when Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism had become the dominant streams of thought. The earliest extant Chinese Muslim writings from the seventeenth century include apologetic treatises that sought to emphasize common grounds between Islam and Confucianism, explaining Islamic tenets in Confucian language and argumentation.<sup>62</sup> Donald Daniel Leslie notes the importance of Confucianization to minorities in China for ethnic and cultural assimilation, especially for upward social mobility and success at the civil service examinations.<sup>63</sup> Yet Islam has only peripheral status in the Chinese system, probably because of its

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<sup>60</sup> Nakamura mentions the widely prevalent practice among Japanese and Chinese Buddhist scholars to centre on the study of Chinese translations, treating Pali and Sanskrit versions as secondary, to the degree that even Indologists rely on Chinese texts as sources of Indian thought. Ibid, p.169.

<sup>61</sup> For a brief understanding of Islam in China, see Donald Daniel Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986); Julia Chang, pp. 177-85; Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, pp. 110-11; Wang Zhixin 王治心, *Zhongguo Zongjiao Sixiangshi Dagang* 中國宗教思想史大綱 [An Outline of the History of Chinese Religious Thought] (Shanghai: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1988; first publ. 1933), pp. 132-46. As a matter of fact, the Arabs also brought into China trade and knowledge on science, medicine, astronomy and calendrical study.

<sup>62</sup> See Julia Chang, p. 182. Early Muslims found Chinese thinking compatible with Islamic thinking, like the notion of 'heaven' and Neo-Confucian cosmological tenets like *li* 理 [principle] and *qi* 氣 [pneuma]. Wang Zhixin remarks that Chinese Muslims' reserved religious and political stances and respect for Confucianism helped their landing on Chinese soil. Wang Zhixin, pp. 145-46.

<sup>63</sup> There were numerous quotes from Confucius, Mencius and ancient sage-kings in Islamic writings. Yet there was no attempt to accommodate with Buddhism or Daoism, which were not compatible with



fundamentalist doctrines. The names 'Islam' (lit. 'surrender') and 'Quran' (lit. 'recite') themselves suggest an uncompromising attitude towards the Other and result in an isolating language policy.<sup>64</sup> The Qur'an did not appear in Chinese until 1609.<sup>65</sup>

Besides Islam, early Christian missions also failed to make their mark on Chinese soil despite attempts at Sinicization. Extant records of the earliest Nestorian translations, for instance, show analogy to indigenous religions, notably Buddhism, and an inclination toward Chinese poetics.<sup>66</sup> But they lacked deep appreciation of Chinese culture and thus failed to engage the gentry and fuse with Chinese thought.<sup>67</sup>

Islamic faith. See Leslie, especially, pp. 115-19, 137.

<sup>64</sup> Muslims are happy to surrender their will to Allah. The Quran is believed to be received by Muhammad from God in Arabic and cannot be transferred into anything other than its purest form.

<sup>65</sup> Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, p. 111.

<sup>66</sup> The Nestorians built churches and monasteries but their presence was not strongly felt. In fact it was only after the rediscovery of a stele in Xi'an in 1625 that the world came to know of the early Nestorian encounter in the seventh century AD. An astonishing Sinicization was the production of a 'Xuting Mishi Cijing' 序聽迷詩詞經 [Sutra of Jesus the Messiah], disguising as Buddhist literature. Gianni Criveller, *Preaching Christ in Late Ming China: The Jesuits' Presentation of Christ from Matteo Ricci to Giulio Aleni* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 1997), p. xxi; Julia Chang, p. 188. The inscriptions on the stele were done by the Persian monk Jingjing 景淨 who, in an attempt to translate Buddhist sutras in collaboration with Buddhist monks, was accused by the Chinese of an inadequate grasp of Buddhist doctrines and the Chinese language. Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, pp. 104. Other Nestorian missionaries were criticized by their mission for the translation of Buddhist scriptures in collaboration with Buddhists in the mid-eight century. An early-translated psalm adopted the prevalent seven-character line common to classical Chinese poetry. Other translations also employed Buddhist and Daoist vocabulary. For instance, 'God' was sometimes translated as *arhat* 阿羅漢 [a monk who has achieved *nirvana*] or *buddha* 佛, 'saints' and 'angels' as various *buddhas* 諸佛, 'saviour' as *dashi* 大師 [Buddhist master] and 'teaching' as *dao*. Ibid, pp. 104-08. Besides, the Nestorian symbol, the 'Cross of Victory', was sometimes depicted as emerging from the lotus, a Buddhist symbol in China. See Julia Chang, p. 189.

<sup>67</sup> Early Christian missionaries took popular cults and regional rites as pagan superstition and viewed polytheism and indigenous concepts like 'heaven' as indication of pantheism. Julia Chang, pp.192-93.

Greater success in this respect was achieved by the Jesuits who expanded eastward after the Reformation.<sup>68</sup> The first Christian mission was established in 1583 by Michael Ruggieri (1543-1607) and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in the southern city of Zhaoxing 肇興.<sup>69</sup> The following century of missionary translation gave rise to the second major period of translation in Chinese history.<sup>70</sup> Yet, unlike Indian culture, European culture was not considered comparable by Sinocentric China, which was

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They had little interaction with mainstream culture. The Franciscan mission, for instance, came to China during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), when China 'fell' into the hands of non-Han Mongols. They established churches and dioceses and translated the New Testament and the breviary into Mongol. Criveller, p. xxi. Thus they failed to reach a considerable audience as their early converts mostly seemed to be of Turkic origin. Julia Chang, p. 190.

<sup>68</sup> It is estimated that under the blessing of various Chinese emperors, missionary activities reached thirteen provinces and the number of Christians counted more than a hundred thousand in late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), including court officials, the Empress of Xizong 熹宗 (r. 1621-1627) and Emperor Sizong 思宗 (r. 1628-1644). Wang Zhixin, p. 188.

<sup>69</sup> Ruggieri 羅明堅 was the first Jesuit father to arrive in 1580 in Guangdong Province. He brought in Ricci 利瑪竇 in 1583, who became the best-known missionary in China. Ricci's adoption of a Chinese name to facilitate social acquaintance was a practice to be followed by his successors. Ricci learnt arithmetic, astrology and Chinese language, classics and history in Rome. This won him scholarly fame and friendship from the Chinese gentry. His meeting with the emperor in 1601, bringing along welcomed tributary gifts of maps, celestial globes and timepieces, further enabled him to access the circle of mandarin officials and gain imperial sanction to extensive proselytism and erecting a cathedral in the imperial capital. See Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, pp. 181-82. His Jesuit colleague Father d'Orleans commented that his enterprising yet accommodating attitude was indispensable for converting and winning the respect of 'a sensitive and xenophobic nation'. See Louis Pfister, *Biographiques et Bibliographiques sur les Jesuits de l'ancienne Mission de Chine 1552-1773* = 在華耶穌會士列傳及書目, trans. by Feng Chengjun 馮承鈞, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1995), II, 31-47.

<sup>70</sup> For Jesuit missionary and translation activities of the period, see, for example, Pfister; Criveller; Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century. The Journals of Matthew Ricci 1583-1610*, trans. by Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953); Joseph Dehergne, *Repertoire Des Jesuits De Chine De 1552-1800* = 在華耶穌會士列傳及書目補編, trans. by Geng Sheng 耿昇, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1995); Julia Chang, pp. 191-201; Ma Zuyi, *ibid*, pp. 180-211; Chen Fukang, pp. 56-61.



then under the influence of mainstream Neo-Confucian thinking, *de facto* syncretism of the three teachings. So there was no ready market for a monotheistic foreign religion. But the Jesuit missionaries decided to compensate for this shortfall by enculturation, pitching themselves to suit the norms of the contemporary cultural power, while ironically, European colonizers started to enculturate their Other in other parts of the world by force.<sup>71</sup>

The Jesuits managed to command the respect of the gentry and the court of the xenophobic nation mainly through the right medium, the right attitude, the right choice of texts and even, the right attire, assuming the identity of Confucian scholars.<sup>72</sup> First, they presented themselves as cultured and ethical Confucian gentlemen, knowing that any writing in Chinese, especially those with a Confucian touch, could reach a vast market in the Chinese empire and its surrounding satellite states in Japan, Korea and Indo China.<sup>73</sup> Second, being aware of the needs of their

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<sup>71</sup> Lionel M. Jensen suggests that 'enculturation' is the more appropriate word than 'sinification' to describe the Jesuits' willingness to undergo acculturation in the name of conversion. He even attempts such wording as 'hybrid Jesuit/Chinese community' and 'reconciliation of natural theology and revealed theology in the name of Confucius'. Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization* (Dublin and London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 40-42, 79. Early Jesuits were convinced not to demand that their converts be like them and were more tolerant and even respectful of the indigenous culture than later missionaries. George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: the story of the Jesuits in China in the last decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), pp. 3-22.

<sup>72</sup> Ruggieri was quoted as saying that the Zhaoqing prefect 'wished us to dress in the manner of their fathers, which is a little different from ours, and now we do, in short, we have become Chinese so that we may gain the Chinese for Christ'. Jensen, p. 42. The mandarin benefactor's desire for Jesuit monks to be dressed like Buddhist monks bears striking coincidence to Herder's demand that the Greeks (the Other) must enter France (high target system) a captive and dress according to its fashion. Herder's metaphor is quoted from Lefevere, *Translation/History/Culture*, p. 74.

<sup>73</sup> Ricci's new edition of *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* contained citations from ancient Chinese



patrons, they broadly introduced numerous Western works on science and mathematics before they translated the Bible, with an accommodating attitude.<sup>74</sup>

Among the three hundred or so translated titles in the late sixteenth to seventeenth

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writings for better reception and refuted all Chinese religious sects except 'the one founded on the natural law, as developed by their Prince of Philosophers, Confucius, and adopted by the sect of the literati'. Ricci, p. 448. Jensen suggests that the largely accommodated 'Confucianism' brought to the West in the sixteenth century was a manufacture of Jesuit imagination, starting from the neologism for its central figure 'Confutius', Latin transcription of Kong 孔 [surname] Fuzi 夫子 [master scholar; an honorific]. Jensen, especially p. 39, 79-91. Besides, they adopted Sinicized language and simplified the highly alien concept of the Holy Trinity. For instance, in a book by Julius Aleni 艾儒略 (1582-1649), titled *Tianzhu Jiangsheng Yanxing Jilue* 天主降生言行紀略 [Brief Record of the Words and Deeds of the Lord of Heaven Incarnate], which was in fact based on *The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Christian God became 'High God' 上帝, 'Lord of Heaven' 天主 and 'Father in Heaven' 天父, Jesus became indiscernible from God, and Virgin Mary became 'Holy Mother' 聖母. Criveller, pp. 203-29. At the very beginning, the Jesuits were keen to claim kinship with Buddhism, which appeared to them as the most popular indigenous 'religion', calling themselves 'Western monks' and their chapels 'temples'. Ruggieri and Ricci first assumed Buddhist attire, but when they discovered that they were mistaken to be just another sect of Buddhism, and that Confucian scholarship was the esteemed pursuit of the gentry, they switched to the robes of Confucian scholars. Julia Chang, p. 191.

<sup>74</sup> Ricci's journals illustrate a fine example of Jesuit accommodation. On the one hand, he criticized the Chinese as primitively superstitious and prone to polytheism and pantheism:

Of all the pagan sects known to Europe, I know of no people who fell into fewer errors in the early ages of their antiquity than did the Chinese...which however ended up in atheism, due to their indulgence in a combination of different religious sects, especially reflected in the blending of the three teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism.

Ricci, pp. 93-105; my ellipses.

Yet on the other hand, he stressed the need for evangelistic versatility and adaptability to the intellectual bent of his pagan targets in China:

In the course of the centuries, God has shown more than one way of drawing men to Him. So it was not to be wondered at that the fishers of men employed their own particular ways of attracting souls into their nets. Whoever may think that ethics, physics and mathematics are not important in the work of the Church, is unacquainted with the taste of the Chinese, who are slow to take a salutary spiritual potion unless it be seasoned with an intellectual flavouring.

Ibid, p. 325.

century, one-third was in science.<sup>75</sup> At the operational level, the Jesuits' practice of choosing texts supplemental to Chinese literate culture and conforming to Confucian decorum was to become an important feature of Yan's translations.

The introduction of the best of Renaissance science was for the Jesuits only a means to an end, since the agenda was to spread Christianity by the prestige of Western science, which they considered as the product of Christendom.<sup>76</sup> High Renaissance and Catholic humanism inspired the Jesuits to the most accommodating means required for realization of the Reign of God, a golden dream passed on from Medieval times.<sup>77</sup> Apart from translation, they also established schools to train Chinese

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<sup>75</sup> As an energized Catholic mission after the Reformation, the Jesuits usually received the best education in ancient and contemporary learning in Europe. Criveller, pp. 4-6. Very often in joint venture with Chinese scholar-officials, the Jesuits translated works on astronomy (the Copernican heliocentric theory was not introduced until the Church lifted its ban in the mid-eighteenth century), mathematics, physics, metallurgy, military science, medicine, anatomy, biology and cartography. They also introduced the telescope and helped to reform the Chinese calendar that was so important for a primarily agricultural economy. Besides they compiled a Latin-Chinese Dictionary and introduced selected excerpts from *Aesop's Fables* for allegorical education. See, for example, Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Yixue Liluan Shigao*, pp. 183-202.

<sup>76</sup> See Joseph Needham, *Chinese Astronomy and the Jesuit Mission: An Encounter of Cultures* (London: The China Society, 1958), pp.13-14. It is note-worthy that the Chinese were in fact cautious and preferred to see modern science as 'new' rather than 'Western', but with mutual exchange of modern Western and older Chinese scientific knowledge, they gradually ignored the difference between Western science and world science.

<sup>77</sup> Upholding the glorious God as their sole inviolable doctrine, the Jesuits were often allowed to practice indigenation to establish trust and status in indigenous soil. They also tried to convey the notion of Christianity as a positive and constructive element of Chinese culture. They saw in Confucianism something of a natural religion on a philosophical level and compared Confucian humanism to Greek humanism, especially to Stoicism, with its pantheist inclinations and its emphasis on ethics as preparation for the Christian gospel. For instance, they accepted early Confucianism as ancient ethics and sanctioned Chinese converts' reverence for their own ancestors as a civil rite compatible with Christian faith. Criveller, pp. 33-75. They also kept provocation to a minimum by



converts in science and astronomy. Some missionaries made court acquaintance, took part in official translation projects and received an imperial stipend as Western scholars.<sup>78</sup> Their influence would have been greatly eclipsed had they only ventured into pure proselytism or theology, the last thing the Confucian gentry would need from those whom they despised as 'barbarians'.<sup>79</sup>

Apparently the joint venture of the Jesuits and their Chinese friends brought complementarity and mutual benefits. Yet it concealed subtle rivalry between the

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attacking only Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Fairbank and Goldman, p. 151.

<sup>78</sup> It is estimated that eleven Jesuits, including Adam Schall von Bell 湯若望 (1519-1666), Ferdinand Verbiest 南懷仁 (1623-1688) and Gaspard Kastner 龐嘉賓 (1665-1709), reached the high post of Directorate of Astronomy 欽天監正, while about twenty-three were appointed officials at various levels between 1662 to 1796. See Dehergne, II, pp. 760-73. Ricci was the first foreigner to be granted the high honour of a designated burial place by the Emperor, in response to the presentation of a petition in suave Chinese style by Father Diego Pantoia. See Ricci, pp. 566-94.

<sup>79</sup> The following account bears striking evidence of Jesuit accommodation and the egotistic and xenophobic ignorance of the Chinese gentry.

Father Ricci was the first one to begin the study of Chinese literature and he was so well versed in what he learned that he became the admiration of the Chinese lettered class who, in their reading, had never before encountered a foreigner from whom they could learn anything. We are purposely treating of this subject here, so that posterity may know what a great advantage was derived from the knowledge of Chinese, and so that Europeans who read this may realize that the interest the Fathers took in the genius of the people was well placed.

Father Ricci began by teaching the first principles of Geography and of Astronomy, and although in the beginning he taught nothing that was not known to an educated European, for those who obstinately defended the errors handed down to them from their ancestors, his teaching was simply astounding and something beyond their imagination. So much so, indeed, that many of them confessed up to that time, their ignorance of the better things had rendered them stubborn and proud, but that now their eyes, which had been unwittingly closed by an impervious intellectual blindness, were really being opened to the more serious things in life...In fact, they deemed it to be quite incredible that a foreigner, coming from a people who up to that time were looked upon as barbarians, could treat so aptly of such subtle subjects, and they all wanted to make copies of his pamphlets.



source and target systems, an intense, almost religious zeal to convert the Other through accommodation, or at times, patronization on both sides. The gentry who supported the Jesuits were mainly a small group of more open-minded scholar-officials, who agreed to be converted in return for foreign scientific knowledge.<sup>80</sup> They commissioned the translation of utilitarian works, especially in arithmetic and astronomy, that could be put to immediate practical use and as a result, many translations were adaptations from several sources. The manipulative interpretation by some mandarins of Christianity reflects a long-held patronizing and utilitarian attitude toward the Other. For instance, Xu Guangqi believed the introduction of Christianity could ‘supplement Confucianism and displace Buddhism’ 補儒易佛.<sup>81</sup> Yang Tingjun and others even hinted at a religious *quadrivium* 四教

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Ricci, p. 447; my ellipses.

<sup>80</sup> Major converted Confucian scholar-officials include Xu Guangqi 徐光啓 (1562-1633), Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1565-1630) and Yang Tingjun 楊廷筠 (1557-1627), who adopted Christian names as Paul, Leo and Michael respectively and were considered the ‘three pillars of Christianity in China’. W. J. Peterson, ‘Why Did They Become Christians? Yang T’ing-yun, Li Chih-tsao, and Hsu Kuang-ch’i, in *East Meets West: the Jesuits in China, 1582-1773*, ed. by Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988), 129-52 (pp. 129-30). It should be noted that they were friends coming from Suzhou and Hangzhou, a region between the Changjiang and Huanghe Rivers in the east, which was economically the most advanced and intellectually the most active. They all believed that the translation of advanced Western science, mathematics, logic and even philosophy could lead to revival of the long-neglected logical strands marginalized by mainstream Chinese studies and would thus be conducive to the prosperity of China. They wrote books and helped in translating, editing and publishing Jesuit works. Another lesser official Wang Zheng 王徵 (1571-1644), who knew some Latin, was noted for his working in tandem with Jean Terrenz 鄧玉函 (1576-1630) on an adaptation of various scientific and technical manuals – *Qiqi Tushuo* 奇器圖說 [Illustrated Handbook on Special Equipment]. See Chen Fukang, pp. 62-74; Criveller, pp. 353-69.

<sup>81</sup> A Grand Secretary in charge of a bureau responsible for calendrical reform and adaptation of Western scientific works, Xu translated in tandem with Ricci the first six chapters of Euclidean geometry – *Jihe Yuanli* 幾何原理 [Basic Principles of Geometry]. He proposed, but to no avail, to the court the systematic introduction of practical sciences to China. His subordinate Li Zhizhao

合流, that is, the blending of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism and Christianity in one accord.<sup>82</sup> Mostly monolinguals, such mandarins usually participated in the co-translation process by adding a refined touch to the Chinese to forestall criticism.<sup>83</sup> They would also preface the work to assert authority of the adaptation, and of the otherwise inferior translator and Western knowledge, alongside rambling remarks on translation.<sup>84</sup>

The second translation climax ended with the Papal denunciation of Jesuit acculturation in the early eighteenth century and the reciprocal ban on Christianity by Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (r. 1723-1736).<sup>85</sup> This reveals the influence of power and

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collaborated with Ricci in several publications on religion and science and proposed to the throne to translate calendrical works. Chen Fukang, pp. 62-65; Criveller, pp. 353-69.

<sup>82</sup> The Buddhist-turned-Christian Yang was noted for enculturating Christian doctrines in traditional Chinese terms. In his books on religious matters, he explained the concept of God as the 'Great Father-Mother' and 'the Lord of Heaven' rearing men like His children, drawing analogy to the Confucian concept of *yin* (the primary receptive element) and *yang* (the primary productive element). Criveller, pp. 353-63.

<sup>83</sup> The unpublished first translation of the Old and New Testaments into vernacular Mandarin by P. L. De Poirot 賀清泰 (1735-1814), who favoured literalism as the better way to preserve the word of God, was criticized as lacking refinement. Ma Zuyi, *ibid*, p. 205; Chen Fukang, pp. 60-61.

<sup>84</sup> In those translations, Western sciences and mathematics were usually promoted as being practical, beneficial to the people and representative of the wisdom of foreign 'sages' from a foreign civilization almost comparable to that in China. Xu Guangqi was noted for saying that the marginalized development of logic and mathematical thought in China since the *Classic of Changes* could be complemented and revived through translation. Li Zhizao and Yang Tingjun associated scientific texts with Buddhist scriptures in explaining the huge difficulties and complementary effects of translation, though they admitted that the two were different in nature. Wang Zheng praised Western works on language, technology and philosophy for fostering the ears and eyes, the limbs and the mind respectively, a typical example of concrete Chinese expression. Chen Fukang, pp. 62-74.

<sup>85</sup> The Jesuit mission went so far as to admit Chinese clergy and to use the Chinese language in teaching theology and in prayers and Mass. This added to mounting disapproval from other missions over their participation in Chinese rites and their concealing of certain doctrines to avoid provoking



politics on translation, although there is no question about the Jesuits' religious fervour and contribution to intercourse between Chinese and Western civilizations. There is no lack of scepticism about the political association between the expansion of Christianity and that of European imperialistic powers after the sixteenth century, about the Jesuit cause as mainly a counteraction to the inflation of Reformation, or about honourable zeal being utilized by religious aggression.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless this was the first time that the European Other left a mark on Chinese soil and some far-sighted gentry learnt to their dismay that they were not the centre of the world.<sup>87</sup> This created a positive effect on the contemporary academic ambience, which carried on into the following Qing Dynasty.<sup>88</sup> Jesuit translations of Chinese classics and literature, on

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local sentiment, such as crucifixion, as the Chinese were unable to fathom why a venerable 'saint' should suffer such misfortune. The so-called Rites Controversy and Terms Controversy culminated at the end of a two-century Christian campaign in China. Julia Chang, pp. 192-95. Criveller, pp. 41-42.

<sup>86</sup> It is suggested that in the sixteenth century, the Iberian nations' desire for power was in a way patronized by a religious cause, with the Papacy sanctioning their political as well as ecclesiastical rights, in pursuance of the millenarian dream of a forthcoming Messianic Reign. This sometimes put the missions in the hands of the conflictive and egoistic interests of Catholic imperial powers. Criveller, pp. 28-29. It is also suggested that the Jesuits decided to spread their wings to the East as the Catholic Church was losing its battleground to the Protestant Movement in Europe and North America. Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, pp. 181-82; Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo Jin Sanbainian Xueshushi* 中國近三百年學術史 [History of Chinese Scholarship in the Recent Three Hundred Years] (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1936), p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> Ironically, Ricci's celebrated *mappamondo* 山海與地全圖 [Complete Map of Mountains, Seas and Land] completed with Chinese assistance circa 1602 unconventionally places China, not Jerusalem at the centre of the world, and the depiction of water therein recalls the woodcut illustrations of Ming Dynasty gazetteers rather than cartographic depictions of European scholars. Jensen, p. 38.

<sup>88</sup> Liang Qichao points out that the Jesuit encounter in the late Ming Dynasty represented the second intellectual interface between China and the outside world, the first being the Buddhist encounter almost a millennium earlier. Under the joint efforts of missionaries and a few Chinese officials, new knowledge was disseminated with the significant introduction of calendrical reforms and numerous adaptations on Western science and mathematics. This created favourable aurora and served to influence the trend of calendrical study and utilitarian statecraft learning 經世致用 in the following



the other hand, presented to the young European nations a colossal ancient civilization at once strange and inscrutable, producing an influence on writers and philosophers such as Leibniz (1646-1716), Voltaire (1694-1778), Rousseau (1712-1778) and the Physiocrats, and contributed to the idealization of China during the Enlightenment.<sup>89</sup> But since Jesuit evangelism remained too brief to have much impact beyond a small group of scholar-officials and the realm of scientific knowledge, and since their strategy of avoiding anything incompatible with Christian doctrines meant that they remained somewhat distant from indigenous teachings, the majority of the gentry still saw Europeans as uncultured barbarians. The influence of the Jesuits did not last long after China closed its door to Christianity and the world in 1724 and the second translation phase was not as significant as the first in terms either of duration or quantity.<sup>90</sup>

No other foreign construction has amalgamated with the Chinese system as seamlessly and productively as Buddhism so far. Apparently the cause is more than a matter of translation orientation. To fuse with Chinese thinking, even a foreign religion had to engage the Chinese intellectually, for the Confucian gentry would be generally more concerned about its moral and philosophical strains than any religious strain. It must be pointed out that in the Chinese tradition, there did not exist a concept of religion in the Western sense.<sup>91</sup> The three dominant schools of thought

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Qing Dynasty. See Liang Qichao, *Zhongguo Jin Sanbainian Xueshu Shi*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, Lennart Lundberg, *Lu Xun as a Translator* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 1989).

<sup>90</sup> Chen Fukang, p. 57.

<sup>91</sup> Extreme caution must be exercised when applying the English word 'religion' of Latin origin (*religio*) – usually taken to signify a bond between the human and the divine – in the Chinese context. The modern Chinese terms for religion, *zongjiao* 宗教, and for philosophy, *zhexue* 哲學, were first

encompassed both a philosophical tradition, called *jia*, concerned with cultivation of the self and the study of canonical texts, and a religious tradition, called *jiao*, which combined philosophical tenets and ritual doctrines to develop popular practices and organized institutions.<sup>92</sup> Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism fulfilled a combination of intellectual, metaphysical, utilitarian, educational as well as 'religious' purposes.<sup>93</sup> Where the Confucian elite were attracted to the supernatural, it often implied a kind of awe or respect for the origin of life and a belief in human's potential of telepathy or intercommunication with heaven, where heavenly signs were

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introduced in the late nineteenth century through Japanese translations of European works, but there had been no essential difference between the two domains in the Chinese tradition.

<sup>92</sup> The word *jiao* 教 [teach] originally represented doctrines of a spiritual and intellectual lineage 宗 (*zong*), which functioned very much like philosophical and religious teachings. See Julia Chang, pp. 1-9. A lineage is an established branch of a school of thought, centred on the teachings of certain thinkers and canonical texts. A major school, like Confucianism and Daoism, is much more than a world view, a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition or a way of life; it also explains the relationship between man and nature or heaven and more importantly, how to be at one with nature through both sensible and intellectual intuition. The Chinese tradition sees the cosmos as a varying but unified whole with which man is in harmony, so everything is treated in a holistic approach with little concern for subject segmentation. Thus a school of thought is at once secular and religious, philosophical and worldly, metaphysical and material, idealistic and utilitarian. The traditional practice was to call a school of thought *jia* 家, after the term became prevalent before the first century. See Fung Yu-lan, *ibid*, I, 21. But with the gradual syncretism of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism drawing both elite and mass audiences with different practical, political and spiritual concerns, it was later necessary to draw a distinction between two different levels of the three systems, as either a philosophy or a religion.

<sup>93</sup> Two seemingly opposite labels, atheism and pantheism, have been used by different people about China, and it is suggested that they are actually two sides of the same coin in the Chinese context, because 'religion' in China is ethic-based, suited to a small-scale agrarian economy primarily concerned with livelihood and harmony and there is no absolute imposition on religious faith or form of worship. See Wang Zhixin, pp. 5-9. Religious Confucianism specifies formalized rituals concerning the worship of heaven, ancestors and ancient sages and other customary ceremonies. See Julia Chang, pp.59-65. Religious Daoism includes ascetic practices aiming at immortality, a wholesome body and mind in harmony with the cosmos. See Fung Yu-lan, *ibid*, II, pp. 424-31.



considered a reflection of earthly order achieved through moral cultivation.<sup>94</sup>

As a result of syncretism of the three dominant teachings, subsumed under humanism-based Confucian cosmology, there has been no dominant religion or religious institution in the Western sense strong enough to rival the state.<sup>95</sup> Even at the pinnacle of Buddhist development in the sixth and seventh centuries, China did not become a Buddhist state.<sup>96</sup> Benjamin A. Elman remarks that Confucian teaching, reshaped by interaction with Daoism and Buddhism, began to centre on the realization

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<sup>94</sup> Generally speaking there are manifold meanings of the word *tian* 天 [heaven] in the Chinese tradition: a material or physical sky, an anthropomorphic presiding power, a fatalistic power, a naturalistic order and an ethical cosmic order. See Fung Yu-lan, *ibid*, I, 30-31. Chinese called the all-embracing first principle of nature or the Heavenly way '*dao*'. The 'way' to which this order was paralleled on earth and mediated by human was also called '*dao*', an example of impressionistic representation. Confucius touched upon the different aspects of heaven in various contexts in the *Analects* 論語, seeing heaven basically as a purposeful Supreme Being, and obliged himself to restoration of the *dao* through (preaching) the consolidation of social and political orders. For Confucius, the *dao* came as natural for ancient sage-kings but had fallen in the Zhou Dynasty; it could be installed through positive human effort, like the 'rectification of names' and proper conduct of rituals, good manners and acts of virtue and righteousness. His later expounder Mencius stressed heaven's ethical and idealistic significance, while Xunzi 荀子 (c. BC 298-c. BC 238), influenced by Daoist naturalistic cosmology, believed that the *dao* of both heaven and earth rests in non-activity and required human to understand the distinction between heaven and human. *Ibid*, pp. 54-75, 177-80, 223-25, 284-88. Daoist founder Laozi accentuated heaven's spontaneous and metaphysical nature as the highest primordial principle of the universe, and the Daoist *dao* is inexpressible and non-assertive, to be attained through quiescence 靜, enlightenment 明 and non-activity 無爲. *Ibid*, pp. 177-91.

<sup>95</sup> In China, religious orders and institutions were loosely decentralized without close knit congregations or nationwide administration, depending on local support or royal patronage, and remained passive in matters of politics. Julia Chang, p. 129; Fairbank and Goldman, p. 81. Even where certain ruler converts adopted Daoist or Buddhist doctrines in running the state, the religious establishment was seldom as authoritative as the mainstream Confucian establishment.

<sup>96</sup> It is observed that Buddhism's inherent capability to adapt to changing environments and to interface with other religions is conducive to its remarkable development as a 'civilizational religion' and 'cultural religion' first across Asia and then the modern world. Reynolds and Hallisey, pp. 3-28.



of the individual's humanity, on the scholar's guided self-cultivation culminating in a personal experience of unity with heaven, earth and all things, which became the foundation for an activism meant to renew every level of the society.<sup>97</sup> Central to the Chinese tradition is the presumed 'correspondence between microcosmic human and macrocosmic nature' or 'correlative cosmology'.<sup>98</sup> The way to this cosmological correspondence is called *dao* 道 [the way].<sup>99</sup> All along, it has been the gentry strand of Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist thinking, sharing an ultimate concern for the *dao*, that occupied high status in the Chinese tradition.<sup>100</sup> This belief in a human immanent and voluntary capability of knowing the noumenal and attaining salvation is quite incompatible with monotheistic Christianity or Islam.<sup>101</sup> Joseph Needham finds it an

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<sup>97</sup> Elman, Benjamin A., *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984), p. xiv.

<sup>98</sup> Fairbank and Goldman, pp. 64-66.

<sup>99</sup> By this definition, *dao* can be similar for Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, signifying a vision of oneness, where the enlightened and cultivated being attaining *dao* lives in harmony with the cosmos. The difference lies in the method of attainment. For Confucius, *dao* existed when pre-Zhou sage-kings reigned the empire. The fallen *dao* could be reinstalled through the rectification of names, following proper conduct of rituals and good manners by men of virtue and righteousness. For Daoists, *dao* is mystically inexpressible, to be attained by immortal saints through quiescence, enlightenment and non-activity. Fung Yu-lan, *ibid*, I, pp. 58-75, 177-191. The Buddhist *dao* requires transcendence over *karma* and attainment of supreme enlightenment through good deeds to be achieved by *buddha*.

<sup>100</sup> It may be difficult for Westerners to determine whether Buddhism or even Confucianism or Daoism is a religion or philosophy. If we are to follow the definition of Paul Tillich (1886-1965) of religion being 'the aspect of depth in the totality of the human spirit', the state of being grasped by an 'ultimate concern' related to the question of the meaning of our life, then Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism can also be considered as religions capturing a large intellectual following in China. Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 7-8. This ought to be differentiated, however, from the mass' belief of a more theistic nature concerned with ritual decorum or supernatural powers.

<sup>101</sup> According to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), 'phenomena' – things as they appear to an observer – is an expression of power whose source can come only from 'noumena', the world beyond where

‘enlightening experience’ to encounter a tradition which has ‘never needed’ the conception of ‘a transcendent creator God’ and nevertheless has ‘got on no worse than others over the centuries.’<sup>102</sup> Contemporary philosopher Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1990-1995) suggests that Chinese philosophy, with a primary concern about ‘life’, illustrates a kind of wisdom capable of ‘melting’ other religions and philosophies.<sup>103</sup>

Conceivably, enculturating translation can be an effective way of melting other traditions. Xu Guangqi was noted as saying that translation was the prerequisite of ‘mediation’ 會通 and in turn ‘transcendence’ 超勝 – transcending their Other, and transcending their own horizon – while Li Zhizhao specified that the translator should know the Other’s world view and mediate between man and heaven.<sup>104</sup> This critical emphasis on metaphysical mediation and transcendence through translation as a moral and scholarly pursuit, rather than mere intercultural communication, represents the

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freedom, God and immortality abide. Kant’s noumenon, or thing-in-itself, covers Plato’s theory of Form or Idea, which is the eternal and pre-existent pattern in the intelligible world of a category in the sensible world. See, for example, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, *Zhongxi Zhexue Zhi Huitong Shisi Jiang* 中西哲學之會通十四講 [Fourteen Lectures on the Interface between Chinese and Western Philosophy] (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju 學生書局, 1963), especially pp. 69-110.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in ‘Foreword’ by Joseph Needham to Chen Lifu, *The Confucian Way. A New and Systematic Study of The Four Books*, translated by Liu Shih Shun (London: KPI, 1986).

<sup>103</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo Zhexue De Tezhi* 中國哲學的特質 [The Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy] (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju 學生書局, 1963), p.7. ‘Life’ is the literal meaning of the noun *sheng* 生 which in verb form means to be born and to grow; from the word *sheng* is derived the word *xing* 性, or the nature of things. See Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1985), p. 175-79. It should be remembered that in Chinese, especially Confucian philosophy, life and human nature are often associated with an innate will and capacity to overcome human weakness and attain virtue and cosmological transcendence.

<sup>104</sup> Xu Guangqi 徐光啓, ‘Lishu Zongmubiao’ 曆書總目表 [Memorial on A Complete Bibliography of Almanac], in *Xu Guangqi Ji* 徐光啓集 [Works of Xu Guangqi], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1984), II, pp. 373-78 (p. 374).



higher mission of Confucian translators and is essential to a new and deeper understanding of Yan Fu's translation project. The endeavour to amalgamate multifarious systems of thought for cosmological transcendence in pursuance of the *dao* was to remain a major purpose of Yan Fu's translation project.

The above study of the first two key translation phases in China shows the ambivalent status of translation. As an 'occupation', translation was often seen as equivalent to the inferior trade of bilingual or polyglot scribes or 'imitating officers', at best a textual or cultural middleman. Even in the high Tang Dynasty, at the climax of scriptural translation, the image of the translator was inexorably tied to the metaphor of a 'tongue-man', a second-rate writer probably associated with presumed literalism.<sup>105</sup> Discourses in translation appear to be confined to literiness and faithfulness. Yet the venerable translators discussed above did not seem to see themselves as primarily engaged in a translation 'occupation'; neither were they esteemed as such. Scriptural translators considered themselves transmitters of the Buddhist *dao*. Jesuit translators saw themselves as God's evangelists; their Chinese partners assisted in translation in the service of their primary duty as scholar-officials. To them, translation was just a tool, a means to a higher mission of spiritual or cosmological pursuit; it was not the end. The metaphors of translation as mediation and (cosmic) transcendence significantly expand the dimension of translation research

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<sup>105</sup> Two lines by Tang poet Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (AD 772-842) defending the literary flair of the translator reflects the generally low status perceived of the translator: 勿謂翻譯徒，不爲文雅雄。 [Do not say a student of translation cannot claim excellence in refined writing.] Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫, 'Song Seng Fangji Nanyue Liu Yuanwai' 送僧方及南謁柳員外 [Poem to Monk Fangji for His Southern Visit to Liu Zhongyuan], in *Liu Yuxi Shiji Biannian Jianzhu* 劉禹錫詩集編年箋注 [Annotated Poems of Liu Yuxi Arranged by Year] (Jinan: Shandong Daxue Chubanshe 山東大學出版社, 1997), pp. 216-17.



and shed light on the ensuing study of Yan Fu.

The above account of the Chinese translation tradition also demonstrates how the selection of source materials and translation approaches reflect the dynamics between a receiving literate culture and its Other in terms of cultural, military or economic power differentials. The orientation of a translation towards the literary and cultural norms of either the source or target system often depends upon the relative force of the two systems: norms are attracted to the taste and values of the stronger or more esteemed system. In traditional China, a nation that saw itself as the centre of the world, literate-cultural superiority was accorded much more importance than economic or military power. To gain acceptance, the Other was expected to demonstrate its cultural merit and reconcile its incongruity by adjusting to mainstream values and poetics. For syncretism, it was supposed to cater for the moral, intellectual, utilitarian, educational and metaphysical concerns of the gentry and fuse with indigenous thinking. Chinese Buddhism represents a phenomenal example of a foreign source being completely ‘translated’ into a regenerative indigenous force in the Chinese system. As the periphery was absorbed and coloured, it simultaneously corrupted (or enriched) the centre and extended its course. This phenomenon can be accounted for by another metaphor – translation as power conversion. As to be examined, Yan Fu’s translation project considerably enfolds the converting and regenerating potentialities of fusing traditions.

By the time of Yan Fu, the economic and military supremacy of the Chinese system was threatened by the Anglo-European system that had sprang up in another part of the world. Sharing Heraclitus’ profundity, Yan knew that the Chinese way could not

and should not remain the same. China ought to be immersed in the course of the Other, allowing itself to be cleansed of its own impurities and reemerge as a rejuvenated whole. This conversion, he insisted, ought not to wipe out China's identity since it needed to return to fuse with its primordial source and generate a new course adaptable to modern contours. He engaged himself in this conversion through translation, and this is what made him the most celebrated translator and among the most venerable thinkers in modern China.



## Chapter 2

### Translation as Reformation: Yan Fu and the Confucian *Dao*

The self-criticism of historical consciousness leads finally to recognizing historical movement not only in events but also in understanding itself. Understanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly meditated.<sup>1</sup>

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) reminds us that the fusion of past and present horizons adds living value to a tradition, influencing new horizons.<sup>2</sup> We cannot stand outside the situation of our existence and see it from an objective distance where the whole of our existence can be illuminated; rather, we ‘light up’ our situation from within.<sup>3</sup> We cannot escape being situated, but we can move about and change our horizon. We experience the world from the point of view of our tradition and language, in which prejudice or foreknowledge, though inevitable, is far more than individual pre-judgment and constitutes the historical reality of human existence. Through critique and abandoning destructive prejudices, while maintaining those that can be considered true, understanding is made possible and tradition can be communicated and preserved. This process of reflection on effective history can never be completely achieved, for ‘the essential nature of the historical spirit consists not in the restoration of the past but in thoughtful meditation with contemporary life,’ Gadamer claims.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., trans. revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> Horizon is defined as ‘the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.’ Ibid, pp. 302, 306.

<sup>3</sup> Patricia Altenbernd Johnson, *On Gadamer* (Australia: Wadsworth, 2000), pp. 24-35.

<sup>4</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp.168-69.

Had Yan Fu written more explicitly about his worldview, he would probably have said similar things. He devoted his entire life to the reflection on human traditions, mediating past and present, East and West in critiques and mainly translations. In his age when military powers dominated the world and material power was the order of the day, it became impossible for China to continue with its hegemonic assimilation of the Other for self regeneration. Instead there was a danger of national or even cultural disintegration. This kind of historical consciousness drove Chinese intellectuals to reason a way out for the ancient empire. The ultra-conservatives adhered vehemently to past horizons while the radicals wished to switch completely over to the horizons of the stronger West.

Yan Fu was among a few intellectuals who tried to fuse horizons to add living value to the Chinese tradition, in search for a *dao* that would help China to fit into an ever-changing world. Like Martin Luther, he strove to reform ossified institutionalization with 'faith' and was particularly relentless attacking past prejudices that had turned into stifling dogmas. But he did not refrain from upholding prejudices that he believed to be correct, nor did he try to escape from his own faith in interpretation, which would be 'not only impossible but manifestly absurd' to Gadamer.<sup>5</sup> As illustrated in chapter 1, the Chinese tradition which he tried to reform and rejuvenate was essentially Confucian. Yet Yan Fu's historical spirit was not fully understood by his contemporaries and was even grossly misread by later radical generations. To better understand how Yan Fu changed and fused horizons, it is necessary to examine the complex life-world in which he was situated.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 397.



By the time Yan Fu was born in 1854, a new international order was inaugurated after the superiority of Han culture had first been challenged by the assault of British gunboats in Chinese waters.<sup>6</sup> Starting from the mid-nineteenth century, Confucian China became gradually debased from a cultural and political power to a quasi-colonial subject following the imposition of humiliating unequal treaties.<sup>7</sup> Throughout his life, Yan witnessed the potent aggression of Western imperial powers, the devastation of domestic uprisings<sup>8</sup> and a dwindling economy,<sup>9</sup> which threatened

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<sup>6</sup> Foreign aggression in modern China began with the First Opium War, or Sino-British War of 1839-1842, ignited by the British for commercial privileges and equal diplomatic intercourse and in retaliation for China's suppression of the opium trade. It ended with China signing the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, which included, among other terms, the ceding of Hong Kong, the opening of five treaty ports, extraterritoriality and the establishment of tariffs. The Second Opium War of 1856-1860, started by Anglo-French forces in an attempt to extend their trading rights in China, ended in the Treaty of Tianjin with Britain, France, Russia and the United States in 1858, and the Peking Convention with Britain, France and Russia in 1860.

<sup>7</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, China had almost become a quasi-colonial state after the Scramble for Concessions in 1898. The Qing government was forced into a series of unequal treaties with major world powers, conceding trading, economic, political and territorial rights through the imposition of privileged clauses, for instance, most-favoured nation, treaty-ports where foreigners could reside, trade concessions, extraterritoriality, colossal war indemnities, navigation rights in the Yangtze River to foreign shipping thereby yielding tariff autonomy, provision for a permanent foreign diplomatic presence in Beijing, forsaking of former tributary kingdoms, ceding and leasing of territories for foreign governance, etc. Major treaties include the Treaty of Wangxia with the United States in 1844, the Treaty of Huangbu with France in 1844, the Treaty of Aihun with Russia in 1858, the Chefoo Convention with Britain in 1876, the Treaty of Shimonoseki with Japan in 1895, and the Boxer Protocol with various powers in 1901. Ironically the declaration of two 'open door' notes by the United States in 1899 and 1900 forcing equal commercial opportunity in China for Britain, Germany, Russia, France, Italy, Japan and itself caused enough conflict and rivalry among the imperial powers to create a power equilibrium that saved the Qing empire from immediate collapse.

<sup>8</sup> There were numerous regional and nationwide peasant and religious uprisings in late Qing, triggered off by economic decline and governmental impotence. The most devastating ones include the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) that claimed to set up the 'Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace' with Nanjing as

the survival of the last dynasty of China and challenged the authority of the hegemonic Confucian-based tradition that had sustained the entire Chinese race. The end of a two-millennia self-contained system of unitary social, political and cultural development once the paragon of neighbouring tributary states and the envy of pre-Enlightenment Europe marked the beginning of modern China and created a new context for translation.

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capital, the uprising of the agrarian Nian Troop in the north (1864-1868) and the Boxer Rebellion (1898-1900) that battled all the way into Beijing and Tianjin. For an understanding of Qing history, see, for example, John King Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, X (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); John King Fairbank and Liu Kwang-ching (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China*, XI (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1992); Du Jiaji 杜家驥, *Qingchao Jianshi* 清朝簡史 [A Concise History of the Qing Dynasty] (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe 福建人民出版社, 1997); Wu Tiefeng 吳鐵峰, *Qing Mo Dashi Biannian* 清末大事編年 [Annals of late Qing Dynasty] (Changsha: Hunan Daxue Chubanshe 湖南大學出版社, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> China was primarily a self-sufficient small-scale peasant economy supplemented by domestic handicraft and retail businesses and insignificant foreign trade. The Confucian attitude of shunning material gain and pursuits did not foster substantial development in infrastructure, commercialism, mechanization and technological innovation. The Qing Dynasty witnessed a continuous period of robust economic, population and territorial expansion from the mid seventeenth to late eighteenth century, after which the economy persistently worsened. Although trade flourished at specific coastal ports in the south through monopolized *hong* agents after the century-old maritime trade ban was lifted in 1684, earlier trade surpluses went into the red with the import of opium from Britain and America at the turn of the nineteenth century. Before the First Opium War, for instance, 100 million teals of silver flowed out per year from 1830 to 1840. There was also a dramatic drop in fiscal reserves, measured in terms of silver teals, from a surplus of 80 million teals and 8 million teals in 1790 and 1850 respectively to a deficit of 30 million teals in 1903. (To give a reference on relative prices, the average wage of a shop hand in the 1870s was about 2.3 teals (3 USD) per month, a sum sufficient to support a small family. See John King Fairbank and Liu Kwang-ching (eds.), p. 439. Several fiscal policies laid down by early Manchu emperors to temper their Han subjects, like fixed land tax and frequent tax exemptions, failed to build up the government coffers and, tampered by mismanagement and serious embezzlement, could not meet with escalating public expenditures on colossal war indemnities, exorbitant defence and self-strengthening programmes, contingency relief to disorder caused by local unrest and natural disasters, costly water control projects and extravagant expenses of the royal court.



The mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century witnessed the third peak of translation activity in China, where the introduction of Western intellectual, scientific and literary translations had an immense intellectual impact on modern Chinese history. This third boom was essentially different from the first two in at least four aspects. Firstly, it was the first time China felt the need to translate a more powerful European Other, which they branded in general 'the West'. The eclipse of China's traditional self-image called for immediate translation of the West. Secondly the engine of this translation movement were mainly Chinese, young intellectuals with Western-style education or with exposure to Western knowledge in treaty ports, among them Yan Fu as the most prominent translator. Thirdly translation covered a much wider range of texts, mostly secular texts from science, technology, arts, literature, economics, social and political sciences to philosophy.<sup>10</sup> Fourthly there was better ambience and

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<sup>10</sup> It is noted that before the 1840s, there were only three reliable reference works about the maritime West produced by Chinese authors, and the other scanty materials on European nations were mostly compiled by foreign missionaries; by 1861 there were about twenty-two books on world geography. Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, 'Changing Chinese Views of Western Relations, 1840-95', in *The Cambridge History of China*, 15 vols., ed. by John K. Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), XI, pp. 142-201 (147-48). From 1895 to 1900, more than thirty newspapers and magazines were launched with extensive coverage of foreign news and works. Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Jianshi*, p. 250. In the last quarter of 1908 alone, there were 533 translated titles, 60% thereof from Japanese sources. At the turn of the century, there were around forty new presses dedicated to new publication. Yang Shouqing 楊壽清, *Zhongguo Chubanjie Jianshi* 中國出版界簡史 [A Concise History of Chinese Publication] (Shanghai: Yongxiang Chubanshe 永祥出版社, 1946), pp. 20-26. This gradually built up a market for translated literature. After the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the scope of translation broadened to include subjects other than science and machinery, many based on Japanese translations. From 1896 to 1911, there were about 1014 titles translated from Japanese sources alone, which already exceeded the sum of all translations from Western sources over the past fifty years. The proportion of subjects in descending order was: social sciences (38%), history and geography (18%), language (14%), applied science (9%), natural science (9%). From 1902 to 1904, the

coordination for translation, with the establishment of private and government schools of foreign languages and translation, the booming of publishers and newspapers, and vigorous proposals on translator training and translation policies, making translation a possible and meaningful economic activity for the first time.<sup>11</sup> Although this did not necessarily elevate the socio-political status of translators at that time, the role of the translator as transmitter of foreign knowledge was widely appreciated. It was against such a backdrop that Yan Fu gained his reputation as ‘the first Chinese to introduce contemporary Western thought’<sup>12</sup> and as ‘top-notch scholar in both Chinese and Western learning’.<sup>13</sup>

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figures on the source of translation in descending order were: Japanese (60%), English (16%), German (4%), French (3%). Xiong Yuezhi 熊月之, *The Dissemination of Western Learning and the Late Qing Society* = 西學東漸與晚清社會 (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1994), pp. 640-41.

<sup>11</sup> Ambassador Guo Songtao 郭嵩燾 (1818-1891) first proposed to establish a foreign language college in 1859, to train translators and diplomats in order to catch up with the West, whom he understood already knew a lot about China. Comprador Zheng Guanying 鄭觀應 (1842-1923) stressed the pressing need to gather information about foreigners with the hope of competing against them. Diplomat Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠 (1845-1900) proposed in 1896 setting up a translator training college and a systematic programme of translation, firstly, texts about the political situation of foreign countries, then materials beneficial to governance, and then textbooks used in foreign schools. Reformer Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) was the first to suggest copying the successful Meiji translation model and translating from Japanese translations of Western works, since Japan was closer to China than Europe in terms of language and mores. He went so far as to recommend the replacement of Confucian classics by translated references on foreign politics and economics for *keju* examinations and the conferment of degrees to distinguished translators. Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) not only launched newspapers, new colleges and translation presses, but also gave concrete suggestions on source text selection, standardization of translation rules and translator training. Of the above people, however, only Zheng and Ma knew Western languages; Liang knew some Japanese.

<sup>12</sup> Hu Shi 胡適, ‘Wushinian Lai Zhongguo Zhi Wenxue’ 五十年來中國之文學 [Chinese Literature over the Past Fifty Years], in *Hu Shi Wencun* 胡適文存 [Essays by Hu Shi], 4 vols. (Taipei: Yuandong Tushu Gongsi 遠東圖書公司, 1979; first publ. 1922), II, pp. 180-260 (p. 194).

<sup>13</sup> Liang Qichao ‘Shaojie Xinzhu Yuanfu’ 紹介新著“原富” [Introducing a New Work *Yuanfu*], 1902, in *Yan Fu Yanjiu Ziliao* 嚴復研究資料 [Research Materials on Yan Fu], ed. by Niu Yangshan 牛仰



Yan Fu was born on 8 January 1854 in Fuzhou 福州 prefecture, Fujian province, Southern China.<sup>14</sup> He was the second child of the humble family of Yan Zhenxian 嚴振先, Chinese medical practitioner. At ten, he studied with Huang Shaoyan 黃少岩, scholar in Confucian classics and Neo-Confucian Rationalism and after his death, switched to his son Huang Mengxiu 黃孟修, who had a second degree at the civil service examinations, or *keju* 科舉. This kind of traditional education was to equip the male offspring of any aspiring family with the necessary classical literacy and stringent essay-writing skills required for *keju*, entrance ticket to officialdom, which demanded at least a decade of economic inactivity. After his early marriage at thirteen, his father's death in 1866 interrupted his traditional studies. To support his widowed mother and two younger sisters, Yan applied for a studentship at the naval school attached to the Fuzhou Shipyard 福州船政學堂, China's first modern naval shipyard,

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山 and Sun Hongni 孫鴻霓 (Fuzhou: Haixia Wenyi Chubanshe 海峽文藝出版社, 1990), pp. 266-68 (p. 267).

<sup>14</sup> Yan's given name at birth was Chuanchu 傳初 and pet name Tiqian 體乾. He started using the alias Zongguang 宗光 and literary style Youling 又陵 when he entered the naval college at Fuzhou Shipyard. He later changed his name to Fu 復 and style Jidao 幾道 when he taught at the Shipyard after returning from Britain in 1879. He had two wives (he remarried after his first wife had died) and one concubine (after his second wife was impaired by bad health) and fathered five sons (one died early) and four daughters. For a chronology of Yan, see especially Wang Quchang 王蘧常, *Yan Jidao Nianpu* 嚴幾道年譜 [Chronology of Yan Fu] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1936); Yan Qu 嚴璩, 'Houguan Yan Xiansheng Nianpu' 侯官嚴先生年譜 [Chronology of Yan Fu from Houguan County], in Yan Fu, *Yan Fu Ji* 嚴復集 [Works of Yan Fu], ed. by Wang Shi 王栻, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986), V, pp. 1545-52; Dong Er 東爾 (ed.), 'Yan Fu Shengping, Yizhu Dashi Nianbiao' 嚴復生平、著譯大事年表 [Chronology of Yan Fu: His Life, Translations and Major Events], in *Lun Yan Fu Yu Yanyi Mingzhu* 論嚴復與嚴譯名著 [On Yan Fu and His Famous Translations], ed. by Shangwu Yinshuguan Section 商務印書館編輯部 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), pp. 153-65.

where he studied navigation under British instructors for five years, together with subjects like English, algebra, trigonometry, geometry, chemistry, mechanics, optics, geology, astronomy and Chinese studies.<sup>15</sup> This kind of non-*keju* based education was almost career and academic suicide, perceived as craft-based ‘Western learning’ and despised by any Confucian scholar with a traditional ‘Chinese education’.<sup>16</sup> Until the lukewarm education reform in 1895, Western learning did not reach traditional schools, and few honourable gentry would ever consider sending their offspring to ‘new’ schools such as the one Yan entered. Even the uneducated mass learnt to scorn Westerners as ‘Western devils’ or ‘red-haired devils’. Yan later was to lament his ‘improper’ education and petty position.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Fuzhou Shipyard was established upon the proposal of Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 (1812-1885), governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang provinces, as a self-strengthening programme. It was first managed by Shen Baozhen 沈葆楨 (1820-1879), Special Commissioner for Shipping who appreciated Yan Fu’s talent but died too early to groom him for office. More such schools were established in the following decades, offering free education, allowances, scholarships, guaranteed future employment as engineers or technocrats, and provided exposure to practical subjects and Western knowledge on top of some traditional Chinese studies.

<sup>16</sup> Lu Xun points out that in Yan Fu’s days, it was generally believed that Westerners were only skilled at machinery, especially chime clocks, and Chinese students who studied overseas were not as privileged as those in his days, for they were perceived to be speaking the language of foreign ‘devils’ and were cast outside the gentry class. He surmises it was why Yan chose to translate in an elevated style, resorting to elegant and rhythmic classical Chinese, to gain recognition. Lu Xun 魯迅, ‘Lu Xun He Qu Qiubai Guanyu Fanyi De Tongxin’ 魯迅和瞿秋白關於翻譯的通信 [Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai’s Exchange of Letters on Translation], 1931-1932, in *Essays on Translation* = 譯論集, ed. by Liu Jingzhi 劉靖之 (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1981), pp. 3-31 (p. 12). Lu Xun also recalls that when he was young, there was a ‘Chinese and Western College’, which was the focus of criticism and a laughing stock for those with a classical education. Lu Xun 魯迅, ‘Suoji’ 瑣記 [Fragmentary Collections], in *Zhaohua Xishi* 朝華夕拾 [Dawn Flowers Plucked at Dusk] (Beijing: Weimingshe 未名社, 1928), pp. 101-16 (p. 106).

<sup>17</sup> Yan’s regret is most apparent in a poem of 1892 to a friend:

Teaching at forty, without a government office  
Who knows not the aspirations of a man?...

四十不官擁皋比  
男兒懷抱誰不知.....



Upon graduation with distinction in 1871 and a few years' practice in Chinese and Southeast Asian waters, Yan was selected to join China's second batch of students to study overseas in 1877.<sup>18</sup> Yan's destination was Britain, which boasted the world's strongest navy at that time, where he studied naval sciences and natural sciences at the Greenwich Royal Naval College with six other Chinese colleagues. He stayed in Portsmouth for a short while before entering Greenwich. The following year, they visited Guo Songtao, the first Chinese ambassador to Britain and France (1877-1879) and one of China's first legations to Europe and the United States.<sup>19</sup> Yan impressed Guo as an outspoken student with critical insight into the differences between Chinese and Western learning and politics.<sup>20</sup> Yan had read western works extensively while studying abroad; he also took an interest in logic, sociology, jurisprudence and economics. In Britain he saw for himself what he believed to be the Western model of

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A peripheral language I learnt, indeed a wrong practice

當年誤習旁行書

The world makes a child and barbarian of me...

舉世相視如髦蠻.....

Yan Fu, 'Song Chen Tongyou Gui Min' 送陳彤卣歸閩 [Seeing Chen Tongyou Back to Fujian], in *Yan Fu Ji*, II, p. 361; my translation and ellipses.

<sup>18</sup> The first batch of thirty students were sent to the United States in 1872 and the second two dozen to Britain and France in 1877.

<sup>19</sup> Among the first Chinese gentry officials to write positively about Western political institutions and cultural values, rather than simply advocating the adoption of Western technology, Guo remarked that Western culture was founded on justice, honour, order and discipline. But his recommendations to the Qing court to refrain from xenophobia and adopt a sensible foreign policy went unheard. J. D. Frodsham, *The First Chinese Embassy to the West: the journals of Kuo-Sung-Tao, Liu Hsi-Hung and Chang Te-yi*, translated and annotated by J. D. Frodsham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 93.

<sup>20</sup> Guo Songtao openly praised Fu's talent in science, current affairs and his acute understanding of the strengths of Western nations compared to the weaknesses of China. He invited Yan to accompany him during his visits to various parts of England and even a study trip to Paris in 1878. Guo Songtao 郭嵩燾 et al., *Guo Songtao Deng Shixiji Liuzhong* 郭嵩燾等使西記六種 [Six Journals on Western Diplomatic Missions by Guo Songtao et al.], ed. by Wang Licheng 王立誠 (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian

a rich and strong country, but it was the underlying legal and constitutional establishments that struck him the most. He was to introduce to his countrymen what he believed to be a superior British legal and judicial system compared with the unjust and corrupted system in his country, mainly in the translation of Montesquieu.<sup>21</sup> He insisted that the Western model, constructed upon the fundamental doctrines of liberty and democracy, provided a clue for reforming the traditional vices and ossified institutions that he perceived of his own country.

Before finishing his studies at Greenwich, Yan was recalled in 1879 to serve as instructor 教習 in the labour-short Fuzhou Shipyard. The following year, he was installed as Registrar 總教習 of the Northern Sea Naval Academy 北洋水師學堂 in Tianjin 天津 by Li Hongzhang, who also recruited him as Principal of the Tianjin Russian School 俄文館 in 1896. He was promoted to Vice-Principal 會辦 of the Naval Academy in 1889 and Principal 總辦 in 1890.<sup>22</sup> These posts were not government appointments. It had been a long-established practice for officials to recruit advisers on an unofficial basis in their camp, called *mufu* 幕府 [tent office], and the system expanded as officials engaged in the self-strengthening movement became increasingly dependent on merchants and technical professionals for advice

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三聯書店, 1998; first publ. 1877-1897), pp. 152-93.

<sup>21</sup> In the commentary on the translation, Yan recalled that he once told Guo Songtao, and who agreed, about his observation at court hearings in Britain, where everything was impartial and the lawyers meant serious business; he noted that the power and wealth of European nations were based on justice, whereas corrupt Chinese courts discriminated against the poor. Yan Fu (trans), 法意 [The Meaning of Laws], 2 vols. (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1904-1909), I, 276-77.

<sup>22</sup> Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823-1901), governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces, was



on legal, fiscal, technical and literary affairs as well as foreign policy.<sup>23</sup> These advisers played an active role in self-strengthening programmes and the development of reformist thinking, but they had no influence on central government policy and their careers were at the mercy of their patrons.

Yan Fu was enlisted in Li Hongzhang's Westernization programme but failed to gain his trust, not only because of his non-traditional education. It is generally believed that Yan's pro-active stance, frequent criticism of the government and the vices of the Chinese tradition and his contempt for corrupt officials and the half-hearted official Westernization programme made him a ready target of criticism. According to his biographer Chen Baozhen, Yan openly remarked more than once that China would lose all its tributary states and would be fettered like a cow within thirty years, and he did not fare as well as his peers.<sup>24</sup> Guo Songtao pointed out in his journals that he was blamed by the conservatives for fanning Yan Fu's arrogance, but he thought this was Yan's inborn disposition.<sup>25</sup> Guo's successor Zeng Jize 曾紀澤 (1839-1890) also

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widely considered the chief architect of the Westernization programme in late Qing.

<sup>23</sup> The *mufu* institution that started in late Ming gained importance during the Qing Dynasty when intense competition and corruption made officialdom more difficult and slightly less attractive. The advisers were mostly missionary-educated with a cosmopolitan outlook, connections in treaty ports and a keen sense of nationalism; some had studied or travelled abroad. See Ma Jianzhong, *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People: The Reform Writings of Ma Jianzhong (1854-1900)*, trans. and intro. by Paul J. Bailey (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1998); Susan Mann Jones, 'Dynasty decline and the roots of rebellion', in *The Cambridge History of China*, X, ed. by John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 107-62 (p. 148).

<sup>24</sup> Those who studied overseas in the same period as Yan did secure more substantial official positions such as warship captains in the navy. Chen Baochen 陳寶琛, 'Qing Gu Zizheng Dafu Haijun Xiedutong Yanjun Muzhiming' 清故資政大夫海軍協都統嚴君墓志銘 [Epitaph of Yan Fu, Qing Senior Statesman and Deputy Naval Commander], 1921, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1541-43.

<sup>25</sup> Yan Fu, *Yan Fu Weikan Shiwen Hangao Ji Sanyi Zhuyi* 嚴復未刊詩文函稿及散佚著譯

saw Yan as a bit arrogant and spoilt by Guo, thought he had a high opinion of Yan's potential.<sup>26</sup> Another reason offered is that Yan ruined his own career due to opium addiction from the 1890s.<sup>27</sup> The validity of this proposition remains uncertain, since opium does not seem to have impeded his active writing and educational career. But Yan had vented his career frustration at the naval academy in letters to friends and relatives.<sup>28</sup>

Yan had good reasons to be disheartened by the official Westernization programme, which began as a short-sighted policy to enforce self-strengthening measures and to pacify domestic protest against China's defeat at the First Opium War in 1842.<sup>29</sup> The rationale for Westernization was inherently Sinocentric and xenophobic, as encapsulated in the motto 'learning the superior techniques of the barbarians in order

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[Unpublished Poems and Essays and Lost Translations of Yan Fu], ed. by Lin Zaijue 林載爵 (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998), pp. 210-15.

<sup>26</sup> Zeng Jize 曾紀澤, *Zeng Jize Riji* 曾紀澤日記 [*Journals of Zeng Jize*], 3 vols (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe 岳麓書社, 1998; first publ. 1893), II, p. 858.

<sup>27</sup> Wang Rongzu 汪榮祖, 'Yan Fu Xinlun' 嚴復新論 [New Discussion of Yan Fu], in *Yan Fu Sixiang Xinlun* 嚴復思想新論 [New Discussion of Yan Fu's Thinking], ed. by Liu Guisheng 劉桂生, Lin Qiyang 林啓彥 and Wang Xianming 王憲明 (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe 清華大學出版社, 1999), pp. 17-24.

<sup>28</sup> Yan revealed that his job was 'constrained' and as insipid as 'chewing wax', that his Fujian colleagues there were discriminated against by the northern clique and he lacked connection, social intercourse and money necessary to climb up the official ladder. Yan Fu, 'Yu Sidi Guanlan Shu' 與四弟觀瀾書 [Letters to Fourth Cousin Yan Guanlan], 1895, 1896, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 731-32. Yan also criticized politics in Beijing as grotesque, the traditional approach of doing things obscure and he saw officialdom as 'floating clouds'. Yan Fu, 'Yu Shengnu He Renlan Shu' 與甥女何紉蘭書 [Letter to Niece He Renlan], 3 February 1910, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 841-42.

<sup>29</sup> The term self-strengthening 自強 originated from the *Classic of Changes*, which reminds man to ceaselessly strengthen himself to be in harmony with heaven: "Heaven, in its motion, (gives the idea of) strength. The superior man, in accordance with this, nerves himself to ceaseless activity." See James Legge (trans.), *Book of Changes* = 周易 (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1993), pp. 4-5.



to control the barbarians'.<sup>30</sup> The inferior Other was charted against the hegemonic Neo-Confucian dualism of *qi* 器 [instrument] and *dao* 道 [principle]; until the 1880s, many intellectuals tried to make sense of Western learning, which to them only consisted of *ji* 技 [techniques], by ascribing it to the 'lower' phenomenal world of *qi*, which was at once inferior to Chinese literate-culture that occupied the 'higher' noumenal world of *dao*. The agenda of 'to learn and control' underpins the conversion and counter-interpellation of the Other through translation. Measures were confined to the introduction of Western craft, devices, machinery, manufacturing and military technology, and knowledge concerning trade and international affairs, which were essentially utilitarian in nature, as enveloped in the motto 'to enrich the country and strengthen the army' 富國強兵.<sup>31</sup> It was not until 1861 that the equivalent of a foreign affairs office, Zongli Yamen was established following China's defeat in the Second Opium War, under which was a School of Combined Learning 同文館, one of the two most important official translation agencies in late Qing.<sup>32</sup> The other was

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<sup>30</sup> The motto was first proposed by Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) in the preface to his milestone-setting treatise which became the first significant Chinese work on the West, outlining background information on history, geography, economics, politics, military, technology, culture, literature and religion, based on the materials gathered by his patron friend Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785-1850), Imperial Commissioner for Frontier Defence of Guangdong province, whose ban on the opium trade led to the First Opium War. First published in 1843, it did not reach the emperor until 1858, an illustration of the strong resistance to Westernization. Wei Yuan, 魏源, *Haiguo Tuzhi* 海國圖志 [Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1999; first publ. 1843), p. 67.

<sup>31</sup> This goes in line with what Zürcher suggests: any teaching in ancient China was expected to be utilitarian, capable of effecting concrete and visible results in this world. Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp. 262-63.

<sup>32</sup> Literally known as 'Office for the Handling of International Affairs' 總理各國事務衙門, the office was revamped in 1901 as the Foreign Affairs Bureau 外務部. Head of the office was Prince Gong 恭

the School of Languages 廣方言館 under the Jiangnan Arsenal established in 1865.<sup>33</sup> Both agencies employed foreign missionaries to be in charge, but the subjects being translated were limited to science and machinery, and circulation was small.<sup>34</sup>

The rationale for Westernization gradually developed into a more dynamic dualism of *ti* 體 [substance] and *yong* 用 [application] after the 1870s, as embodied in the motto ‘Chinese learning for essential principles, Western learning for practical applications’, which widened the scope of Western learning from the instrumental level to economic and socio-political levels.<sup>35</sup> The *ti-yong* conception not only concealed a political agenda to forestall opposition from reactionaries, but it also

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親王 (1833-1898), who had been anti-foreign but changed his attitude after the Beijing Convention of 1860, when he came to admire the strength of the British.

<sup>33</sup> The Jiangnan Arsenal 江南製造局 was established upon Li Hongzhang’s proposal to manufacture domestic, industrial and military machinery based on a Western model.

<sup>34</sup> Notable missionaries receiving official appointment include John Fryer, W. A. P. Martin and Young J. Allen. It is estimated that in the 1870s, the Jiangnan Arsenal sold 83,454 copies of translated works, 90% thereof on science and machinery. See Li Nanqiu 黎難秋, *Zhonghuo Kexue Wenxian Fanyi Shigao* 中國科學文獻翻譯史稿 [A History of Chinese Translation of Scientific Literature] (Hefei: Zhongguo Kexue Jishu Daxue Chubanshe 中國科學技術大學出版社, 1993), p. 103. According to R. P. Dore, this figure was far below the 250,000 copies of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Seiyojijo* [Conditions in the West] in Meiji Japan almost immediately after its publication in 1866. For reference, see Hao Chang, ‘Intellectual change and the reform movement, 1890-8’, in *The Cambridge History of China*, XI, ed. by John King Fairbank and Liu Kwang-ching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 274-338 (p. 276); Wei Yungong 魏允恭 (ed.), *Jiangnan Zhizaoju Ji* 江南製造局記 [The Jiangnan Arsenal] (Taipei: Wenhai Chubanshe 文海出版社, 1969; first publ. 1905).

<sup>35</sup> The concept was first introduced by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909), governor-general of Hunan and Hubei provinces, who suggested abandoning impractical traditional doctrines, adopting useful Western learning, setting up new schools, translating Western works, launching newspapers, and reforming education and the *keju* system. But he was against any social or political reform that would undermine the authority of the imperial court or other feudal establishments. Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, *Quanxue pian* 勸學篇 [Exhortation to Learn] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1998; first publ. 1898), p. 121.



offered a theoretical premise for assimilating foreign elements for regeneration of the Chinese tradition, similar to what generations of translators had done in the past.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, there persisted an age-old tendency to de-Westernize, or Sinicize, by the same token, the cultural origin of the Other, claiming that modern Western disciplines and gadgets came from China, that even Westerners acknowledged these as ‘methods from the East’ 東來法.<sup>37</sup> It is note-worthy that so many leading intellectuals of the period should have engaged in such an indiscreet practice.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Notable gentry officials who supported the *ti-yong* conception include Li Hongzhang, Guo Songtao, Feng Guifen 馮桂芬 (1809-1874) and Xue Fucheng 薛福成 (1842-1923). Feng’s famous treatise on reform proposals released in 1861 failed to reach the emperor until 1889, again illustrating the strong resistance to Westernization. Feng Guifen 馮桂芬, *Xiaobinlu Kangyi* 校邠廬抗議 [Straightforward Words from the Lodge of Early Zhou Studies] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1998; first publ. 1861), pp. 2-3.

<sup>37</sup> For instance, early Qing scholar Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1601-1695) and Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1662-1722) asserted that trigonometry could be traced back to the ancient sage the Duke of Zhou. Westernization theoretician Wei Yuan mentioned that Latin translations of Confucian classics had helped Jesus to found his religion. Littoral intellectual Wang Tao 王韜 (1828-1897) ascribed Chinese origin to clockwork and gunnery. Reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao proposed that the embryonic conception of constitution, parliament and the rule of law could be traced back to primeval China. Comprador Zheng Guanying said that ancient Chinese literature on algebra, astronomy and other codes were lost altogether to the West. Nationalistic scholar Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1935) held that certain notions in modern physics, chemistry, geography and astronomy were embodied in excerpts from the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi*. Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (1848-1905) claimed that Mohism was the origin of Western ideas like individual right, universal love, the belief in God and soul, as well as Western science, machinery and military craft, while scientific theories relating to gas, electricity and the Copernican theory could be traced back to marginalized ancient classics. See Quan Hansheng 全漢昇, ‘Qingmo De “Xixue Yuanchu Zhongxue” Shuo’ 清末的“西學源出中學”說 [The Late Qing Theory of ‘Western Learning Originated in China’], in *Zhongguo Jindaishi Luncong* 中國近代史論叢 [Anthology on Modern Chinese History], ed. by Li Dingyi 李定一 et al. (Taipei: Zhengzhong Shuju 正中書局, 1956), I, 5, pp. 216-58; Xiong Yuezhi, pp. 712-23; Jerome Ch’en, *China and the West: Society and Culture 1815-1937* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), p. 65.

<sup>38</sup> Some scholars recorded rumours about barbaric acts of Westerners in their writing. For example, Wei Yuan recorded that Westerners used the eyeballs of newly dead Chinese in the making of drugs

Such self-deluding and self-aggrandizing discourse was believed to be psychologically pacifying and culturally reassuring, rendering foreign ideas more manageable and breeding nostalgia for antiquity that was so revered in the Confucian order, and so facilitating foreign import without the loss of China's cultural identity.<sup>39</sup> Yet it failed to provide a broader theoretical and philosophical construct for various branches of Western knowledge necessary to make that import productive. The West remained some blurred, distant and decontextualized Other, remarkable only for gadgetry inventions. Yan Fu was not the only one opposed to this cultural ambivalence, but he was probably the first to offer a convincing rebuttal in theory. He pointed out in a critique in 1895 that Western nations rose to power based on freedom as *ti* and democracy as *yong*.<sup>40</sup> In another critique in 1902, he refuted its fundamental premise: *ti* and *yong* were correlative aspects of a given entity and it would be absurd to compare, and worse still, separate the two.<sup>41</sup> He went on to dismiss attempts at de-Westernization as 'slander'.<sup>42</sup>

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and silver. Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682), solid scholar of the school of statecraft, noted that Westerners steam-boiled children for food. Quan Hansheng, *ibid*; Xiong Yuezhi, *ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> See Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, p. 201; Paul A. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 177-80.

<sup>40</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yuan Qiang' 原強 [Whence Strength], 4-9 March 1895, in *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 5-15.

<sup>41</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Waijiaobao Zhuren Shu' 與“外交報主人”書 [Letter to the Editor of *Foreign Affairs Journal*], 1902, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 557-65. In this article in China's first journal specializing in international affairs launched in 1901 by the Shangwu Yinshuguan, Yan quoted a contemporary as saying that an ox and a horse were two different substances with their own varied applications and it was unheard of that an ox could be used as substance and simultaneously a horse its application. Similarly Chinese and Western learning both had a unique substance and application of their own; the two were independent entities and merging the two would be destructive to both.

<sup>42</sup> Yan criticized Chinese scholars who, knowing nothing about science, bragged that science was



Before the Sino-Franco War over Vietnam in 1885, the court was dominated by the xenophobic ‘pure stream’ 清流 clique under the blessing of Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太后 (1853-1908). They were mainly *keju*-based gentry ministers who openly attacked the *mufu* of Westernization officials, including even the influential Prince Gong, Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872), governor-general of Jiangnan and Jiangsi Provinces and Zeng’s protégé Li Hongzhang. They were particularly relentless with those involved in foreign affairs. A posting to Zongli Yamen was in itself obnoxious enough, let alone a posting overseas.<sup>43</sup> That was why Yan’s mentor Guo Songtao could not help his protégé with his career, nor could he even shield himself from vicious slander.<sup>44</sup> Yan did not benefit, either, when the tide turned in favour of

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present in ancient China. Yan Fu, ‘Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu’ 與張元濟書 [Letter to Zhang Yuanji], 1902, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, p. 550.

<sup>43</sup> It is suggested that China did not send her first resident minister abroad until 1876, and only at the persistent demand of the British government. Of the seven ambassadors and thirty odd diplomats sent overseas between 1875 and 1900, only a handful (for instance, Zeng Jize) could speak a foreign language. One minister was quoted as saying that no gentleman with a sense of honour could possibly bother to learn anything about foreign affairs; another was said to have wept with shame on hearing his appointment to the Zongli Yamen and resigned from all his posts to avoid such a disgrace. Frodsham, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>44</sup> Guo was attacked for praising Western civilization in his journals, so the version printed in 1877 by Zongli Yamen was banned and the printing blocks destroyed at imperial order. He was forced into retirement in 1878, even though Cixi admitted that he was ‘a good man with considerable contribution during his ambassadorship afterall’. Quoted from Zeng Jize, *Zeng Jize Riji*, II, p. 777. Guo was even boycotted by the gentry from his native province of Hunan because of his ‘indecent’ venture into the land of the devils. Several of his successors were recalled due to libel by gentry officials back home, for such reasons as following the barbarian way of conduct and being influenced by foreign culture, which might damage the authority of the state. Between 1877 and 1900, there were already seven ambassadors in office. Guo’s successor Zeng Jize was once queried by an imperial Hanlin Academy scholar whether he was competent enough for diplomacy and Confucian-minded enough to spread Confucianism overseas, since he did not attain the highest *keju* degree. See Guo Songtao et al., p. 3; Li

Westernization after the Sino-Franco War. Notwithstanding the vigorous programme comprising the development of modern arsenals and Western education, the green light given by Empress Dowager Cixi was just a stratagem to set the conservative party off the Westernization camp to her own political gain. The slogan of the minority Westernization camp, 'external settlement with foreigners; internal political reform', turned out to be an impotent stance toward Western powers and an empty promise to the aggrieved people. According to Zhu Weizheng, the lukewarm attempt at internal reform ironically strengthened the resolve of a newer generation of reform advocates, who realized that the ultimate hindrance for reform lay in the traditional political system, and their call for reform and revolution escalated toward the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup>

The Sino-Japanese War 1894-95 marked a watershed in the life-world of Yan Fu and his contemporaries.<sup>46</sup> The crushing of supposedly 'impregnable' naval bases and the

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Enhan 李恩涵, *Zeng Jize De Waijiao* 曾紀澤的外交 [Zeng Jize's Diplomacy] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1966), pp. 75-76, quoted in Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, p. 181.

<sup>45</sup> Zhu Weizheng 朱維錚, "'Junzi Meng': Wan Qing De 'Zi Gaige' Sichao" '君子夢': 晚清"自改革"思潮 ['A Gentleman's Dream': the 'Self-Reform' Trend in Late Qing], in *Ershiyi Shiji* 二十一世紀 [Twenty-First Century], 18 (1993), 4-7. It is important to note that many revolutionaries were formerly reformers. Even top revolutionary Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866-1925), for instance, who received Western education in Hawaii and Hong Kong, made an attempt to enter Li Hongzhang's *mufu* by setting out his reform proposals in a long letter to Li in 1894. Frustrated by Li's perfunctory reply, he went to Honolulu to set up the 'Society to Restore China's Prosperity' 興中會, which became the forerunner of other secret revolutionary groups he headed, like the Revolutionary Alliance 同盟會 in Tokyo in 1905. Sun, Yat-sen 孫中山, 'Shang Li Hongzhang Shu' 上李鴻章書 [Proposal to Li Hongzhang], 1894, in *Sun Zhongshan Wenji* 孫中山文集 [Collected Essays of Sun Yat-sen], 2 vols. (Beijing: Tuanjie Chubanshe 團結出版社, 1997), II, pp. 590-601.

<sup>46</sup> The Sino-Japanese War ended with the Treaty of Shimonoseki 馬關條約 in April 1895, which provided for Korea's independence and termination of tribute to China, an indemnity of 200 million



much prided Northern Sea Fleet 北洋水師 shocked other nations as much as China in that Goliath should be beaten by a former tributary state which had once modelled its language, culture and education on the cultural giant and had only begun Westernization in 1868.<sup>47</sup> The success of the Meiji Reforms served as a striking antithesis to the demise of the Qing court. The fiasco revived the awareness of the need for true modernization. Even the American Secretary of State, John W. Foster, one of the mediators of the Shimonoseki Treaty, advised the Qing government to strengthen its military, enact Western laws, construct railways, and improve its taxation to pave the way to power and wealth.<sup>48</sup> Intellectuals at home severely criticized and reflected on traditional systems, desperate for some elixir to save the country. This prompted the massive production of newspapers, critiques and translations of foreign works, areas in which Yan Fu played a significant role in modern China.

Yan's immediate response to the Sino-Japanese War was released in four well-known political critiques from February to March, 1895 in Tianjin *Zhibao* 直報 [Straight

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teals, the cession of Taiwan, the Pescadores and the Liaodong Peninsular in the north, the opening of four treaty ports, and the right for Japanese nationals to run industrial and manufacturing businesses in China.

<sup>47</sup> The Meiji Restoration in 1868 ended 250 years of cultural and economic isolation under the Tokugawa Shogunate and marked the beginning of Japan's modernization under the Reign of Meiji 明治 [Enlightened Rule]. Emperor Mutsuhito (1852-1912) took the 'Charter Oath of Five Principles' in 1868, which launched Japan on the course of Westernization through a series of social and political reforms, such as the abolition of the feudal land system in 1871, the creation of a new school system in 1872, the adoption of the cabinet system of government in 1885, the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889, and the opening of the Diet in 1890.

<sup>48</sup> Wu Tiefeng, p. 24.

News], namely 'Lun Shibian Zhi Ji' 論世變之亟 [On Drastic World Changes]<sup>49</sup>, 'Yuan Qiang' 原強 [Whence Strength]<sup>50</sup>, 'Pi Han' 闢韓 [Refuting Han Yu]<sup>51</sup> and

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<sup>49</sup> Yan Fu, 'Lun Shibian Zhi Ji' 論世變之亟 [On Drastic World Changes], 4-5 February 1895, in *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 1-5. In this essay, Yan examined the contemporary world order and the differences between China and the West and concluded that China ought to adopt Western learning and recruit talent with practical knowledge of the world in order to compete in this fast changing world. He began with a shade of historical determinism, asserting that world changes were caused by *yunhui* 運會, the natural course of events within which all people just flowed with the tide. Ancient sages could foster a peaceful state only because they had sharp perception and prediction, but not because they had the ability to change the tide. This shows the tremendous influence of evolutionary thinking. He attributed China's weakness to its preference for ossified dogmas that stressed passive harmony, steadiness and complacency, fortified by an outmoded *keju* system. He refuted his countrymen's bias that Westerners were only known for economics, technology and craftiness, attributes which Yan reckoned as exemplifying only the West's material strength, arguing instead that its lifeblood lay in the pursuit of truth and justice. Ironically in China, the very same values laid down by ancient sages failed to prosper, while in the West they were sanctified by the principle of inborn freedom upheld by codified law and social fabrics. Twice in the essay, Yan warned of the danger of self-extinction and reiterated that his views were not inordinate. His onslaught on selfish and sluggish gentry officials and his yearning for capable and far-sighted talents to enforce Westernization seems to hint at his own thwarted official career.

<sup>50</sup> In this essay, Yan analyzed the causes of a powerful West and a feeble China. He cited the application of Darwin's evolutionary tenets in sociology by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), whom he admired most, and whose conception he surmised as equivalent to, yet whose language was more explicit and elaborate than *Great Learning*. To him, Spencer's advocacy of empirical studies as the key to knowledge and social progress was reminiscent of the *Great Learning* ideal of investigation of things for the extension of knowledge and in turn regulation of the state. Yet many gentry officials were corrupt and ignorant of both domestic and foreign affairs, unaware of the fact that the contemporary West was in no way akin to China's past barbarian neighbours. Yan opined that modern Western states were established upon the principles of freedom and democracy and strict enforcement of codified laws while China, on the contrary, resembled a sick man, rotted by a despicable *keju* system and personal greed at the expense of the interest of the state. Without comprehensive reform, Yan reckoned, China might face the same fate as India and Poland. He remarked that self-strengthening measures hitherto, such as instalment of Westernized facilities, were unadapted to Chinese soil and provided only temporary relief, so there was urgent need to enhance the energy, morality and most importantly, intellect of the people. Again he reiterated that his remarks were sincere and sensible. In his sequel to 'Yuan Qiang', Yan reiterated his reproach on the greed, ignorance and obstinacy of the



ruling class and lunged his protest against peace settlement with Japan and international aid, which to him would further weaken the state and reform momentum. Yan Fu, “‘Yuan Qiang’ Xupian’ ‘原強’續篇 [Sequel to ‘Whence Strength’], 29 March 1895, in *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 36-40.

<sup>51</sup> Yan Fu, ‘Pi Han’ 闢韓 [Refuting Han Yu], 13-14 March 1895, in *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 32-36. In this essay, Yan refuted the distortion of Confucius’ teaching by Tang Dynasty Confucian scholar Han Yu as exemplified in the latter’s essay ‘Yuan Dao’ [Whence Dao]. Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), gentry official known for his restoration of ancient prose in the Tang Dynasty, is considered the bulwark of Confucian ethics as the supreme ideology of the state. For a brief overview of Han Yu’s thinking and prose, see Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 568-86. In ‘Whence Dao’, Han Yu defined *dao* as the way to progress through benevolence (*ren*) 仁 and righteousness (*yi*) 義, practiced by ancient sage-kings who saved the people from extinction by inventing agents that safeguarded their livelihood and establishing order and standards that secured a peaceful and prosperous society. Han went on to generalize that it was the subordinates’ duty to implement the ruler’s orders and relay them to the people, failure of which should induce punishment. He concluded that the true *dao* pertained to Confucianism rather than Daoism or Buddhism, which prized nature over authority – a reaction against the predominance of the two ideologies during the Tang Dynasty. It is worth noting that Han had spent ten years in the imperial capital Chang’an for the Metropolitan Examination and had been demoted several times before he released this essay that established him as a Confucian patron saint. Han Yu, ‘Yuan Dao’ 原道 [Whence Dao], in *Han Yu Sanwen Xuan* 韓愈散文選 [Selected Essays by Han Yu] (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1992), pp. 1-20. A translation of the essay, ‘Essentials of the Moral Way’, can be found in Wm. Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), I, pp. 569-73. In ‘Pi Han’, Yan Fu sharply rebutted Han Yu for equating the ruler with virtuous sage-kings, thus misrepresenting Confucius’ model of people-based rule of virtue as the pretext for ruler-based rule of virtue. Yan was convinced that the seeds of democracy were already sown in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, binding the king to benevolent rule and accountability to the people. He clamoured for a return to the primal Confucian tradition, which already incubated the equivalent of modern Western ideas such as democracy, government of and for the people, and the displacement of oppressive autocratic monarchy that was proven unfit for survival. It was the rulers since the Qin Dynasty, whom he likened to great thieves, who stole the country from the people and, in collusion with underlings, subjugated and benumbed the people through the imposition of ethical and legislative straitjackets. Yan also believed that Laozi’s interpretation of the *dao* based on natural existence and harmony was enlightening and applicable to the contemporary world. These show evident traces of evolutionary influences. However, Yan held that kingship should be installed insofar as the society was not yet ready to rule itself and as such, should be retained in China at a time when the populace were still lacking in intellect, morality and energy; and observed that even advanced Western countries, like Britain, were not yet ready for

‘Jiuwang Juelun’ 救亡決論 [On What Determines Rescue or Perishing].<sup>52</sup> They attacked Confucianism in its capacity as an institutional ideology, which dominated all aspects of life including rites, law, religion and learning and was bent towards idealistic speculation and pedantic studies. This has given rise to a prevalent view that Yan Fu was unreservedly anti-Confucian and pro-Western at this stage.<sup>53</sup> But

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full democracy. On the contrasting arguments of Yan Fu and Han Yu, see also Lin Anwu 林安梧, *Zhongguo Jin-xiandai Sixiang Guannianshi Lun* 中國近現代思想觀念史論 [On the History of Thought and Concept in Modern and Contemporary China] (Taipei: Xueshen Shuju 學生書局, 1995), pp. 157-73. Lin discerns that Yan’s pronounced critique of Han was a highly symbolic act as his subject of criticism, ‘Yuan Dao’, was considered an almost inviolable Confucian canon. Its release following China’s debacle at the Sino-Japanese War indicated a turning point in the world of thought in China, revealing the crisis of the Confucian tradition in the face of modern challenges.

<sup>52</sup> Yan Fu, ‘Jiuwang Juelun’ 救亡決論 [On What Determines Rescue or Perishing], 1-8 May 1895, in *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 40-54. This piece begins with a definite rebuttal to *bagu*, which symbolized the *keju* system:

The most evident fact and inevitable trend under heaven is this: China will definitely fall today without reforms. What first to reform then? Reply: Nothing as imperative as scraping *bagu*, which exhausted the country’s talents, harming the country indirectly.

Ibid, p. 40; my translation.

Yan then outlined three main vices of the system. Firstly, it curbed the intellect, denigrating learning to a blind pursuit of dead knowledge and hollow titles. Secondly, it prompted corrupt examination practices like plagiarizing and ghostwriting. Thirdly, it bred slackness, engaging the gentry in empty philological and classical studies and making them an exclusive but idle class above the peasants, workers and merchants, a tradition that proved inferior to the intellectual milieu in Western countries and Japan, where universal education, practical studies and multifarious expertise were emphasized. Thus, its immediate substitution by Western learning was necessary. Yan further censured the ignorance and Sino-centricity of the Chinese and previous half-hearted attempts at Westernization, contrasting the latter with Japan’s recent success at modernization on a Western model. He contrasted hollow metaphysicians and pedants with Western scholars, who respected classical knowledge but were not constrained by old learning. He then spelt out the essential contents of Western learning, which bore obvious traces of his Western education and his faith in evolution.

<sup>53</sup> This view was first fully propounded in Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫, *Yan Fu Sixiang Shuping* 嚴復思想述評 [A Critique of Yan Fu’s Thinking] (Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1964; first publ. 1940). Zhou divided Yan Fu’s life into three categorical phases: wholesale Westernization around the



evidently his criticism of traditional vices was steeped in profound reflection and selective transmission of the entire Chinese tradition, with extensive quotations from ancient classics, which actually embodied exaltation of certain primordial Confucian values.

In 'On Drastic World Changes', for instance, he quoted Confucius and the *Classic of Songs* and did not defy Confucian sages totally – he was only against their passive suppression of desire and competition that led to subsequent fabrication of moral and ritual straitjackets. In 'Whence Strength', he complained that the heritage of the *Classic of Changes* and *Laozi* failed to be transmitted, so that the people were not yet fit for reforms and imported Western systems failed to take root. In 'Refuting Han Yu', he appeared more a non-conformist than an iconoclast – attacking oppressive monarchy and ossified Confucian rituals but upholding Confucius' ideal of populace-based kingship and rule of virtue. In 'On What Determines Rescue or Perishing', his attack on the *keju* system and Song metaphysics was blatant but not categorical. He did acknowledge that the *keju* itself reflected the cultural and intellectual achievement of a rich and powerful nation and was not virtually useless. He just deplored that the antiquated system produced generations of bookworms who failed to transmit the traditional heritage, so that ancient wisdom, like the empirical spirit embodied in *Great Learning*, had to be rediscovered through modern Western epistemology and methodology. His attack on Song metaphysics was directed at those impractical pedants who ossified the enlightened teachings of Mencius and the classics.

These assertive critiques created an instant nationwide sensation. 'Pi Han' was reprinted the next year in Shanghai *Shiwubao* 時務報 [Journal of Current Events], launched in 1896 by reform leader Liang Qichao. This set Yan at odds with the mainstream rightists, since it attacked Han Yu, who to them was inviolable vanguard of the Confucian establishment. Court official Zhang Zhidong ordered a partisan to send a rebuttal to *Shiwubao* to return fire.<sup>54</sup> Schwartz describes Yan's 1895 critiques as his 'Declaration of Principles', articulating 'all the basic assumptions which are to underlie his translation efforts of the next few years'.<sup>55</sup> He was to release a lot more influential critiques, many in his newspaper *Guowenbao* 國聞報 [National News] and its affiliated weekly magazine *Guowenhuibian* 國聞匯編 [Compilation of National News].<sup>56</sup> Yan Fu's *Guowenbao* and Liang Qichao's *Shiwubao*, being the

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<sup>54</sup> Tu Meijun 屠梅君, 'Bian "Pi Han" Shui' 辨"辟韓"書 [Rebuttal to 'Pi Han'], in Niu and Sun (eds.), pp. 373-76.

<sup>55</sup> Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 43

<sup>56</sup> Yan launched *Guowenbao* together with his friends Xia Zengyou 夏曾佑 (1863-1924) and Wang Xiuzhi 王修植 in Tianjin in late 1897. The paper published news adapted from Western journals and translated practical Western learning from Russian, British, French, American, Japanese and other foreign sources. Yan's first translation *Tianyanlun* first met the public in the form of a series in the paper in 1897. It is estimated that Yan released at least 27 critiques in *Guowenbao* alone in 1897-98. Yan's critiques sometimes appeared in the form of editorials or under a penname, though his unique style was easily identifiable. 'Pi Han', for instance, was released under the penname of 'Guanwoshengshi Zhuren' 觀我生室主人 [Host of Observe-my-life Studio]. On the issue of authorship in *Guowenbao*, see Wang Shi 王棊, 'Yan Fu Zai *Guowenbao* Shang Fabiao Le Naxie Lunwen' 嚴復在"國聞報"上發表了哪些論文 [What Articles did Yan Fu Release in *Guowenbao*], in *Yan Fu Ji*, II, pp. 421-52. Yan's earlier articles include: 'Lun Zhongguo Jiaohua Zhi Tui' 論中國教化之退 [On the Retrogression of Chinese Moral Teaching], 'Youru Sanbao' 有如三保 [On the Preservation of Race, Nation and Faith], 'Lun Zhongguo Fendang' 論中國分黨 [On the Establishment of Political Parties in China], 'Lun Yicai Zhi Nan' 論譯才之難 [On the Hardship of



most influential papers at that time, were often regarded as the mouthpiece of the reform camp.

Yan Fu's Western exposure distinguished him from contemporary scholars, but it did not offer him competitive edge in *keju*, which was primarily based on Confucian literature.<sup>57</sup> As the only exit to officialdom, *keju* offered upward mobility.<sup>58</sup> But there was a moral perspective to *keju* that made it tantalizing: the perfect gentleman aspired to devote his entire life to discharging duties pertinent to his office, and before that, to cultivating decorum to illuminate his truthful intentions, according to reverend Confucian scholar Han Yu.<sup>59</sup> Ideologically, *keju*-based education prescribed the way for personal cultivation, the traditional means to regulation of the self, family, state and of all under heaven. Deprived of a classical education and so lacking the state-student status, the aspiring Yan first acquired the prerequisite title by purchase and then returned to his native place Fujian for the Provincial Examination in 1885,

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Translators] and 'Xixue Menjing Gongyong' 西學門徑功用 [Methods and Functions of Western Learning]. *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 79-83, 90-95; II, pp. 481-90.

<sup>57</sup> The prehistory of *keju* could be traced back to the Han Dynasty but the system was not fully developed until the Song Dynasty as a means to broaden the class background of the civil service. Specifications differed slightly at various times. The Qing examinations consisted of three papers: 1. three essays on the *Four Books* (*Great Learning* 大學, *Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸, *Confucian Analects* 論語 and *Mencius* 孟子) and one regulated poem; 2. five essays on the *Five Classics* (*Classic of Change* 易經, *Classic of History* 書經, *Classic of Songs* 詩經, *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 and *Classic of Rites* 禮記); 3. five policy questions on the application of the Classics 經傳, Histories 史學, Poetry 詩學, Appointment 取士 and Paleography 六書. Candidates were required to answer questions in *bagu* 八股 [eight-legged] essay form, a kind of stereotyped essay consisting of eight parts in format. The system was reformed in 1901 and abandoned in 1905.

<sup>58</sup> Success in *keju* brought civil service appointment, legal and tax benefits and raised one's status to the gentry class, which was important, since the Confucian-based social and political hierarchy raised the gentry above the peasants, workers and merchants.

<sup>59</sup> Han Yu, 'Zhengchen Lun' 爭臣論 [On Court Admonishers], in Han Yu, *Han Yu Sanwen Xuan*, pp.

failing which he took the equivalent nation-wide examination in Beijing in 1888 and 1889, and then repeated the Provincial Examination in Fujian again in 1893.<sup>60</sup> He failed all attempts. But then the Sino-Japanese War convinced Yan that *keju* and sham Westernization programme could not save his country. His reading around this period of Thomas H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* and before that in 1881, Herbert Spencer's *Study of Sociology* strengthened his conviction that the Western way was the key to supplement and reform the Chinese way. Apparently Yan Fu's contempt for *keju* did not merely represent the protest of a bitter loser. Deeply influenced by Social Darwinian tenets, he believed that *keju*-based education and institutions were unfit for the modern world and should be screened out in the evolutionary process.

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121-31.

<sup>60</sup> The examination hierarchy in the Ming and Qing Dynasties ran as follows. Pre-school apprentice students were first educated at home, often under a private tutor with a degree. They then sat for the Youth Examination, or *tongshi* 童試, at the county 縣, department 州 and prefectural 府 levels, passing which would win them a *shengyuan* 生員 [licentiate] title, better known as *xiucai* 秀才 [distinguished talent], which was the prerequisite for entering a state school or sitting for *keju*. They had to pass annual Licensing Examinations (*suikao*) 歲考 and a special qualifying subject examination, or *kekao* 科考, to renew and upgrade their *shengyuan* status. Then they took the triennial Provincial Examination in the fall (*xiangshi*) 鄉試 for a first degree, or *juren* 舉人 [raised candidate] status, to gain candidature of the triennial Metropolitan Examination in spring (*huishi*) 會試 for a second degree, or *gongshi* 貢士 [tribute literatus] status. The top three grades of *gongshi* would then head for the highest third degree, or *jinshi* 進士 [literatus presented to the emperor for appointment] status at the Palace Examination (*dianshi*) 殿試, where they would be ranked into three major grades by the emperor. Surviving all of the above exhausting hurdles, the final batch of literati would normally gain an official appointment decided at the Court Placement Examination. For reference, see Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Ichisada Miyazaki, *China's Examination Hell: the Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China*, trans. by Conrad Schirokauer (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976; first publ. in Japanese, 1963); Hilary Bettie, *Land and Lineage in China: A Study of T'ung-ch'eng County, Anhui, in the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Liu Zhaobin 劉兆瓚, *Qing Dai Keju* 清代科舉 [The Civil Service Examinations of the Qing Dynasty] (Taipei: Dongda Tushu 東大圖書, 1977).



His first draft of *Tianyanlun*, the translation of *Evolution and Ethics*, appeared around 1895.

In *Tianyanlun*, Yan suggested that rigid *keju* systems involved more foul practice than fair play and exhausted talents in passive and degenerative studies unsuitable for modern government, which would impede evolutionary progress and lead to probable elimination of the Chinese race.<sup>61</sup> In another addition contrasting Chinese learning with Western learning, the latter valuing innovation over imitation, Yan regretted that the legacy of pre-Han philosophers, distinguished as it was, had long been abused by rulers to fetter learning.<sup>62</sup> Actually Yan was not the only intellectual to attack the vices of *keju*.<sup>63</sup> Even some conservative officials wanted to change the system.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> This remark does not exist in the source text *Evolution and Ethics*, but is added in the third paragraph, Chapter 16, Section One of Yan Fu (trans.), *Tianyanlun* 天演論 [On Evolution] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1998; first woodblock print 1898), p. 209, to precede what was Part XIII of the 'Prolegomena', in Thomas H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1911), p. 37. Yan's criticism is in fact well founded. As the population escalated from 100 million in the early eighteenth century to 426 million in the mid-nineteenth century, there was cut-throat competition for *keju* and it was not rare for candidates well over fifty sitting for higher degrees. Only about 1.5% of the candidates sitting for county Youth Examinations attained the preliminary *xiuca*i status. The overall success rate for the *juren* first degree at Provincial Examinations was 2%, while the rate in southern provinces was less than 0.01%. In general, northern candidates seemed to fare better in civil examinations, and the majority of high officials also came from northern provinces. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, pp. 140-44, 656-64. It is suggested that sons of literati and merchant elite tended to get higher examination rankings and officialdom. See Bettie.

<sup>62</sup> This comment appears at the end of the commentary of Chapter 3, Section II of *Tianyanlun*, p. 274, which roughly corresponds to pages 53-56 of *Evolution and Ethics*.

<sup>63</sup> Some late Qing reform advocates proposed educational reforms, revamping of examination syllabus and awarding equivalent status to students who studied in Western-style and overseas colleges. Zheng Guanying, for instance, proposed in 1884 that Western disciplines be taught in provincial public colleges and included as *keju* requirement. He was the first to advocate revamping the school system

Having pursued four *keju* attempts, it is indeed ironical that Yan Fu found it less than gratifying when he was finally conferred the coveted *jinshi* highest degree of arts 文科進士出身 at the age of fifty-six in January 1910 by the moribund Qing court in its last futile attempt to acknowledge the contribution and recoup the support of talents without a traditional education.<sup>65</sup>

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into a system of primary and secondary schools with subject specialization. Paul J. Bailey, *Reform the People: Changing Attitudes towards Popular Education in Early Twentieth Century China* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> Li Hongzhang suggested including the study and making of machinery as a special *keju* category. See 'Zhiban Waiguo Tiechang Jiqi Zhe' 置辦外國鐵廠機器摺 [Memorial on the Establishment of Foreign Arsenals and Manufacture of Machinery], in Li Hongzhang, *Li Hongzhang Quanji* 李鴻章全集 [Complete Works of Li Hongzhang], 9 vols. (Haikou: Hainan Chubanshe 海南出版社, 1997), I, pp. 321-23. Ding Richang 丁日昌 (1823-1882), governor of Fujian Province, suggested the inclusion of practical subjects like current affairs, military expertise, natural sciences, foreign languages and foreign affairs. Lü Shiqiang 呂實強, *Ding Richang Yu Ziqiang Yundong* 丁日昌與自強運動 [Ding Richang and the Self-Strengthening Movement] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica 中央研究院近代史研究所, 1972), p.347. Even the more reactionary Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909) wrote that change in the *keju* system was a prerequisite for any change in other areas and quoted neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi as saying that *keju* should be suspended for thirty years before the court could run properly. See 'Bian Keju' 變科舉 [Reforming the Keju System], in Zhang Zhidong, pp. 137-38.

<sup>65</sup> The Qing government started futile attempts to pacify the revolutionary cause by fabricating a series of reforms after the 1898 Hundred Day Reforms, abolishing *keju* in 1905, announcing intention to enact a modern constitution in 1906 with a nine-year lead-time to implementation, as well as conferring honorary titles on talented intellectuals. Among the 1910 batch of nineteen recipients of the *jinshi* or *jueren* degrees were Zhan Tianyou 詹天佑 (1861-1919), known as the father of railroad in China and among the first batch of students to be sent to the United States in 1872, Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘 (1857-1930), who studied in Britain, Germany and France, as well as Wu Guangjian 伍光建 (1866-1943) and Wang Shaolian 王劭廉, both Yan's pupils at the Northern Sea Naval Academy who later studied in Britain. Yan was sarcastic about his late conferment, as shown in a 1910 poem. The first four lines of the eight-line seven-character poem run as follows:

No longer in my prime, I mock that I am old	自笑衰容異壯夫
Flinching and faltering at dusk in the winter cold	歲寒日暮且踟躕
Offering treasure to my lord, a mayhem had I got	生平獻玉常遭刖



According to Yan, *Tiyanlun* had been intended as reference materials for his students at the naval academy and other friends, but its favourable initial reception by his friends prompted its publication – he had chosen *Evolution and Ethics* since it was not easy to translate other Western books on metaphysics 理學 and he had considered his translation a ‘scholarly pursuit of the abstruse and the exclusive, which did not address imminent needs’.<sup>66</sup> This means that his target first readership was a select few rather than a broader audience, let alone the masses, the function was academic and intellectual exchange, for he devoted his energy to teaching and research, and his concerns appear to be more metaphysical than utilitarian. With substantial notes and commentaries, *Tiyanlun* can be regarded as his intellectual critique, not simply textual transference of *Evolution and Ethics*. As will be elaborated in the coming chapters, Huxley’s brief comparison of different religions and ideologies of the world and his exemplification of social and cosmic evolution provided a point of departure for Yan’s own cross-cultural studies, fusing traditions and horizons to search for an all-embracing philosophy to the modern world. This kind of pursuance of a fundamental way of being and its earthly application was representative of a Confucian scholar’s pursuance of the *dao*.

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Today’s conferment is what I had not sought

此日聞詔本不圖

Yan Fu, ‘Chuqi Jiandi Chaozuo’ 初七見邸抄作 [On Return from Your Residence on the Seventh Day of the Twelve Month], attached to his letter to Wu Guangjian, ‘Yu Wu Guangjian Shu’ 與伍光建書 [Letter to Wu Guangjian], January 1910, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 585-86; my translation.

<sup>66</sup> Yan mentioned that even though his mentor Wu Rulun highly commended his work, he had had no intention to publish it if not for the persuasion of Liang Qichao and his friends at the private studio of Lu Shenshi 盧慎始. See the last paragraph, which is omitted in some versions, of ‘General Remarks on Translation’, in Yan Fu, ‘*Tiyanlun* Yi Liyan’ 天演論譯例言 [General Remarks on Translation of *Tiyanlun*], 10 June 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1321-23. This invalidates the claim that Yan made

Nevertheless, when *Tianyanlun* greeted the public in 1898, it was the social or racial evolutionary concerns of ‘competition and elimination’ and ‘survival of the fittest’ that caught the headlines, rather than Yan’s broader cosmological concerns. It became as much an ideological shock to the gentry conservatives as it was a stimulant to reformers and intellectuals all over the country. Lu Xun, often held to be the greatest writer in Communist China, recalled his youthful days reading *Tianyanlun* whenever he had time.<sup>67</sup> The translator and his work became almost a household name, and he gained the title ‘Evolutionary Yan’ 嚴天演 and ‘Evolutionary Master’ 天演宗師. The direct impact was to last for at least twenty years. The immediate success of *Tianyanlun* spurred his resolution to pursue a translating career, and he developed a thoughtful plan of publication.<sup>68</sup>

By mid-1899, when Yan was deeply absorbed in his translation of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*, he told a publisher friend that he would go on to translate shorter and related works, like Walter Bagehot’s *Physics and Politics* and Herbert Spencer’s *The Study of Sociology*, after which he would try larger volumes such as John S.

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abundant adjustments due to the pressing need to save his country and cater for the mass readers.

<sup>67</sup> Lu Xun recalled that reading ‘new books’ became trendy those days and he found *Tianyanlun* eloquent, exciting and informative. Lu Xun, ‘Suoji’ 瑣記 [Fragmentary Collections], in *Zhaohua Xishi* 朝華夕拾 [Dawn Flowers Plucked at Dusk] (Beijing: Weimingshe 未名社, 1928), pp. 101-16 (pp. 112-13).

<sup>68</sup> According to his letters to publisher friend Zhang Yuanji, Yan was disheartened by his career in the naval academy and wished to make his mark through translation. He proposed the setting up of a translation bureau to Northern Sea Naval Academy and discussed publication projects with Shangwu Yinshuguan. He pointed out that he would continue translating regardless of business opportunities. But he also admitted that the lowly status of a translator, popular as he was, drew contempt from the mainstream. Yan Fu, ‘Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu’, 1899, pp. 525-29, 533-37.



Mill's *A System of Logic* and Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*.<sup>69</sup> Some of his translations were released in parts in newspapers before being published as an independent title. His eight major works in chronological order of date of first full publication are the translation of Thomas H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (1898), Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1901-02), Herbert Spencer's *The Study of Sociology* (1903), John S. Mill's *On Liberty* (1903), Edward Jenks' *A History of Politics* (1904), Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws* (1904-09), John S. Mill's *A System of Logic* (1905) and William S. Jevons' *Primer of Logic* (1909), totalling about 1.7 million words in classical Chinese, one-tenth of which were his own commentaries.<sup>70</sup> This has not taken into account shorter works, such as the translation of Alexander Michie's *Missionaries of China*, Walter Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*, and an adaptation of Alfred Westharp's writing on Chinese education.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, pp. 526-30. Yan did not finish *First Principles*. He remarked that *The Study of Sociology* alone would require a top-notch translator at least a decade to finish. He released the first two chapters, titled *Quanxue pian* 勸學篇 [Exhortation to Learning], in *Guowenbao* in 1898 and the whole work, renamed as *Qunxue Siyan* 群學肆言 [On the Study of the Group], was published in 1903 by Wenming Bianyi Shuju (文明編譯書局).

<sup>70</sup> The translations of *The Wealth of Nations* and *Missionaries in China* were first published by Southern Sea Public School, and those of *On Liberty*, *A History of Politics*, *the Spirit of Laws* and *Primer Logic* by Shangwu Yinshuguan. The total number of words that Yan wrote other than translation is about one million. See Wang Shi, 'Yan Fu Yu Yanyi Mingzhu' 嚴復與嚴譯名著 [Yan Fu and His Famous Translations], in *Lun Yan Fu Yu Yanyi Mingzhu* 論嚴復與嚴譯名著 [On Yan Fu and His Famous Translations], ed. by Shangwu Yinshuguan Editorial Section 商務印書館編輯部 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), pp. 1-21 (pp. 17, 19).

<sup>71</sup> Alexander Michie's *Missionaries of China* in 1892 was about litigation and diplomatic negotiation concerning conflicts between foreign missionaries and local Chinese communities. Yan started translating the book as soon as it was released and remarked in the summary before the main text that the original work was an analysis of the causes of missionary incidents: improper handling of disputes by missionaries and the local Chinese further inflated by diplomatic intervention. Yan revealed that he maintained correspondence with the senile author Alexander Michie 必克 (1833-1902), whom he described as having deep affection for China. See Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', p. 539. Yan added

According to Jiang Zhenjin, Yan's contemporaries reckoned that his translations were superior to other renderings available at the time, which were either impractical (not beneficial to the people and the state) or unreadable (not fluent in Chinese).<sup>72</sup> Yan expressed the same opinion in personal correspondence, asserting confidently that several of his translations represented important works that few could handle in the coming thirty years, while remarking that few contemporary translators could bring subtle and abstruse Western ideas across.<sup>73</sup> The exchanges between Yan and Zhang Yuanji suggest that there was increasing awareness at that time of the importance of a translation and publication policy.<sup>74</sup> It is clear that a number of newspapers and translation presses were after him for subscription or directorship, and he bargained

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nine commentary entries in his translation. See Yan Fu (trans.), 'Zhina Jiao'an Lun' 支那教案論 [On Missionary Incidents in China], 1899, in *Yan Fu Weikan Shiwen Hangao Ji Sanyi Zhuyi* 嚴復未刊詩文函稿及散佚著譯 [Unpublished Poems and Essays and Lost Translations of Yan Fu], ed. by Lin Zaijue 林載爵 (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998), pp. 216-62.

<sup>72</sup> Jiang Zhenjin (蔣貞金), "'Yan Jidao Shiwen Chao" Xu' "'嚴幾道詩文鈔"序' [Foreword to "Collected Works of Yan Fu"], in Niu and Sun (eds.), pp. 378-79.

<sup>73</sup> In his letters to Zhang Yuanji, Yan criticized a recent translation of *The Wealth of Nations* as being full of errors and doing more harm than good. He said that he could readily offer a list of books to be translated, but the translation boom had pushed up the commission of translators, some of whom Yan thought did not measure up to their job, for specialized disciplines such as economics and calculus required knowledgeable translators. He also complained that many students who went to Europe at the turn of the century were not knowledgeable, weak in Western languages and even Chinese, while those who went to Japan were boastful and not conscientious. Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', 1899, 1905, pp. 526-30, 552-55.

<sup>74</sup> Zhang Yuanji (張元濟) (1866-1959), holder of the *jinshi* highest degree, had worked in the Ministry of Punishment and Foreign Affairs Office and forwarded reform proposals before being dismissed by the government after the Hundred Day fiasco. He was co-founder of All Skills College 通藝學堂 with Yan Fu, founder of the translation college under Shanghai Southern Sea Public School 上海南洋公學 and head of the translation department of Shangwu Yinshuguan, the first modern publisher in China



with them on commission fee, copyright and royalty for he believed that a royalty system could boost quality and business of the translation trade.<sup>75</sup> Having established his fame in translation, however, he was worried about copyright issues, as indicated by the unauthorized reprinting of his translations.<sup>76</sup> In response to Zhang's enquiry on various translation issues, Yan's detailed answers reflect his emphasis on, as well as his ability in attaining a select repertoire, a prioritized timetable, readability of the target text, the translator's knowledge of the subject matter, suitability to the imminent needs of the times, cost control and project management.<sup>77</sup>

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established in Shanghai in 1897.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 1899-1901, pp. 533-44. It is interesting to note that Zhang Yuanji, who remained outspoken on copyright and publishing issues, raised in a related consultation document that royalty to foreign countries could be ignored to speed up massive translation and to compensate for the unfair competition between Chinese and Western publishers. Quoted from Chen Fukang 陳福康, *Zhongguo Yixue Lilun Shigao* 中國譯學理論史稿 [A History of Chinese Translation Theory] (Shanghai: Waiyu Jiaoyu Chubanshe 外語教育出版社, 1992), p. 143.

<sup>76</sup> After his first three published translations were pirated, Yan asked his favourite student Xiong Jilian to investigate whether the same was done to his newly released translations. Yan Fu, 'Zhi Xiong Jilian' 致熊季廉 [Letter to Xiong Jilian], 1904, *Yan Fu Weikan Shiwen Hangao Ji Sanyi Zhuyi*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>77</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', 1899-1921, pp. 524-557, especially pp. 525-29. Yan's replies to Zhang Yuanji show that translation was a much more complicated business than the translation publisher could fathom. Certainly Yan did not favour quantity at the expense of quality, unlike Jiangnan Arsenal and other presses. He maintained that unlike Buddhist sutras, current Western works were multifarious and voluminous and required translators not only conversant in language and literature but also proficient in a wide range of foreign subjects. He complained that his earlier advice on translator training went unheard, so there was a shortage of good translators. He was positive about Zhang's invitation to preside over a translation series, which he thought would be speedy, but he opined that the market was short of competent translators in subjects such as law, politics and economics, which would make commissioning expensive and editing agonizing. He suggested instead a select and less costly project, which resembled that for sutra translation, commissioning a couple of top-notch bilinguals, twice that number of Chinese editors, and an expert in Western learning to produce one accurate, lasting and weighty volume a year, which would be better than producing a pool of mediocre works. As for international law, there would be a need to translate several titles to offer a broad overview of the subject. He suggested appending a glossary (standardized after consultation) at

It must be noted that nine out of the eleven eighteenth and nineteenth-century titles mentioned above were produced by British writers (except Montesquieu and Westharp).<sup>78</sup> This is hardly a coincidence, for Yan Fu's translation project was highly influenced by his own background and concerns. The purpose of his British education sponsored by the Westernization camp was to learn the secrets of the West. It is only natural that, having learnt English at Fuzhou and in London in the late 1870s, he became predominantly attracted to English works and to 'the workshop of the day', the epitome of a mercantile and imperial Europe imbued with a spirit of exuberant invention and expansion. British positivism, laying inductive reasoning as the foundation of empirical science, seemed a compensatory logical order to Chinese philosophy, which was prone to fuzziness and idealism. The codified modern legal, social, economic and political systems precluded the need to await the mercy of the sage-king. Above all, scientific epistemologies and systematic methodologies manifested an inherent propensity to be learnt by all men and seemed to him the clue to attain the Confucian ideal of orderly governance effected through the extension of knowledge via the investigation of things in a modern world. Interestingly thus, Post-Enlightenment Europe and its flagship Britain 'illuminated' Yan as a new consciousness to be transmitted across physical boundaries to broaden the horizon of his readers.

Evidently Spencer was among Yan Fu's favourite writers, for he attempted to

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the end of translations, instead of publishing separate specialized dictionaries, which might be confusing and not viable.

<sup>78</sup> As Paul A. Cohen observes, late Qing reform-minded intellectuals were influenced by Westerners who lived and wrote after 1800. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, p.5.



translate three works relating to his thinking. When Yan Fu first read *The Study of Sociology* in 1881 after returning from his overseas studies, he related that he found the work a remarkable echo to one of the basic insights of Chinese thought expounded in such Neo-Confucian classics as *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean*.<sup>79</sup> As for *Tianyanlun*, Schwartz remarks that Yan used Huxley as ‘a point of departure for presenting his own interpretation of Spencer’s evolutionary philosophy’ and of Huxley, ‘a foil for the master’.<sup>80</sup> According to Schwartz, Spencer was exciting to Yan not merely because his evolutionary traits or his ideas were similar to the insight of certain ancient sages, but because he clearly demonstrated that true knowledge was precisely to be found in the methods of Western science – the methods he had studied in Britain contained the key to truth itself.<sup>81</sup> Yan found Spencer’s organic association of the pursuit of true knowledge through empirical research with the overcoming of emotional and moral distortions embodying a high degree of detachment, and considered it similar to the Confucian standard of moral attainment.<sup>82</sup> Thus it appears that his primary concern in translation was more academic and philosophical than utilitarian in nature.

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<sup>79</sup> See translator’s epilogue in Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunxue Siyan* 群學肆言 [On the Study of the Group] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1903), p 9. According to *Great Learning*, realization of the Confucian *dao* starts with the investigation of things 格物 in the pursuit of true knowledge 致知, effecting sincerity in purpose 誠意 and rectitude of the mind 正心, which are conducive to ideal governing of the self 修身, family 齊家, state 治國 and entire nation 平天下. See James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese/English Four Books* = 漢英四書 (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1992), pp. 3-21. *Doctrine of the Mean* states how the superior man can cultivate equilibrium, harmony and thus cosmic order, by remaining watchful, sincere and decorous, acting in accordance with the way of Heaven. Ibid, pp. 24-61.

<sup>80</sup> Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 111.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, pp. 34-35.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 34.

Having a keen interest in Spencer's speculative philosophy, Yan described his *System of Synthetic Philosophy* as the most extraordinary book in European history, applying the evolutionary theory to biology, psychology, sociology and morality and demonstrating the principles of 'the preservation of the race' and 'progressive evolution'.<sup>83</sup> Spencer's synthetic approach and conception of a self-regulating organic society probably appeal to Yan's holistic Confucian epistemology, with which the perception and application of knowledge – earthly, spiritual or transcendental – were based on a set of basic canons or principles.<sup>84</sup> Yan had no time to translate the whole series but his rendering of the title *System of Synthetic Philosophy* into *Tianren Huitonglun* 天人會通論 [Discussion on the Mediation between Human and Heaven] shows a clear strain of Confucian correlative cosmology. His translation of the title of its first book *First Principles* into *Tianyan Diyi Yihai* 天演第一義海 [First Principles of Evolution] and that of a chapter within the fifth book *The Principles of Morality* into 'Qunyi' 群誼 [Group Fraternity], reflects Spencer's paramount influence on Yan in evolution and sociology.<sup>85</sup> His

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<sup>83</sup> Yan Fu (trans.), *Tianyanlun*, pp. 42-43. Spencer's *System of Synthetic Philosophy* consists of five books in ten volumes: Book 1 First Principles; Book 2 The Principles of Biology I, II; Book 3 The Principles of Psychology I, II; Book 4 The Principles of Sociology I-III; Book 5 The Principles of Morality I, II. Herbert Spencer, *System of Synthetic Philosophy*, 10 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883).

<sup>84</sup> Schwartz is hinting the same when he states that Yan found Spencer explaining scientific disciplines in terms of large philosophical principles and placing them within an overall grandiose scheme in which each is assigned its proper place. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 36.

<sup>85</sup> To cite yet another example, Yan claimed that Walter Bagehot's 1875 work *Physics and Politics* offered excellent elucidation on sociology and drew extensively from Spencer, whose evolutionary thinking influenced eighty to ninety percent of discourses to come. See Yan Fu (trans.), *Tianyanlun*, pp. 176, 197. Yan completed his translation, 'Gezhi Zhiping Xianguanlun' 格致治平相關論 [On the



reception of *The Study Of Sociology* as displaying the ‘methodology of sociology rather than the subject in itself’, which to him required accomplishment in discipline, governance and spiritual cultivation reveals again that his primary concern was moral and academic in nature.<sup>86</sup> It follows that the utilitarian goal ‘in search of wealth and power’, as suggested by Schwartz, was a secondary rather than prime preoccupation of Yan’s translation project, even though it must have been perceived by the wider public as a viable and adorable function.

There is reason to believe that Yan’s translation project represents an attempt to develop his own system of synthetic philosophy, with *Tianyanlun* declaring his first principles, which were basically abstruse and metaphysical. His subsequent translations served as a point of departure for his own critique on various domains, namely, economics, sociology, politics, law, logic and education. This accounted for the ample adjustments and commentaries in his translations, even though he seemed to have suggested in *Tianyanlun* that it was not proper to deviate from the source text, a problem to be discussed in chapter 5. In his second extended translation, *Yuanfu*, he remarked that there were few reordering of or addition to *The Wealth of Nations*, which was simply not true for he admitted at the same time that he attempted

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Relationship between Science and Orderly Governance] in 1899 but it was never published. Bagehot (1826-1877) was a famous English economist and political analyst.

<sup>86</sup> See translator’s epilogue in Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunxue Siyan*, pp. 7-9. Yan stated that the kernel chapters in this work were ‘Difficulties of the Social Sciences’ and ‘Discipline’. He also briefly compared the concepts of ‘society’, ‘nation’ and ‘individual’ in Chinese, Japanese and Western languages. It should be noted that when Yan first translated the first two chapters of this work for *Compilation of National News* in 1897, he used the title *Qunxue Pian* 勸學篇 [Exhortation to Learn]. He later resumed translation and the whole work was titled *Qunxue Siyan*, which appears more topic-oriented.

summarizing, deletion and added commentaries.<sup>87</sup> Yan explicated that *The Wealth of Nations* was an older work about economics without stating the ‘proper methods’ of the subject, but it appealed to him as seeking to illustrate the application rather than definition of principles and to mend fallacies rather than lecture on the subject, giving concrete and comprehensible examples and useful discussion of situations in Europe, Asia and Africa, which served as ready reference for the Chinese context.<sup>88</sup> Yan had hoped *Yuanfu* could mend the mistakes of previous translations on economics by shallow translators, which did more harm than good.<sup>89</sup> He aspired to find through translation verified and lasting economic principles that would be conducive to China and preempt its probable elimination, such as government non-intervention, giving full play to the individual’s dexterity and the positive aspects of gain seeking and self-assertion, which had been taboo by Confucian ethical standard. This embodies an intention to supplement Confucian learning with Western knowledge, rather than merely copying it.

Yan’s translation project was primarily a self-cultivation project beginning with moral

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<sup>87</sup> Yan acquired the 1880 Clarendon Press edition of *The Wealth of Nations* edited by James E. Thorold Rogers in 1892 and translated it between late 1896 and early 1901. Pi Houfeng studied the source text that Yan used, now collected in the library of East China Normal University in Shanghai, and observed that it bears Yan’s signature, zeal and ample marginal notes on section summary, subheadings, comments, date of translation and marks indicating where to omit. Pi Houfeng 皮後鋒, ‘The Translation and Dissemination of *The Wealth of Nations* in Modern China’ = “原富”的翻譯與傳播, *Chinese Studies* = 漢學研究, 18:1 (2000.06), 309-30.

<sup>88</sup> See Yan’s ‘Remarks on Translation, in Yan Fu (trans.), *Yuanfu* 原富 [Whence Wealth], 2 vols. (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1901-1902), pp. 7-15. Yan made it clear that the study about economic matters did not start with Smith, for there had been discursive discussion in ancient China, Greece and Rome. He also suggested translating the newer works of J. S. Mill (1806-1873), Francis Amasa Walker (1840-1897) and Alfred Marshall (1842-1924) in order to give a more complete picture of the discipline.



discipline, empirical knowledge and as he insisted, (Western) scientific verification. Yet given the broader holistic Confucian world view, it would be unrealistic to assume that his works did not react to the needs of the times or did not serve, or were not perceived to serve concomitant social and political functions. Highly committed to his own faith and probably realizing the immense influence of his works, he was outspoken with his political stance. In *Yuanfu*, for instance, he deplored the bloodshed of the Hundred Day Reform and blamed the reform camp for their indiscretion and reckless reforms.<sup>90</sup> In his preface to the translation of *The Study of Sociology*, he censured the ‘shallow and imprudent’ reformers for engendering a vicious cycle: being ignorant of the huge dimension and long-term nature of the issue, they shouted vainly for naive and precipitate changes, leading the masses blindly into boisterous causes that brought only destruction and counterproductive measures.<sup>91</sup> His translations in fact embody his intellectual and political critique, showing a rather conservative political stance despite frequent criticism of traditional vices and government malpractice.

Sharing a similar goal to transform the country into a wealthy and powerful state with

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<sup>89</sup> Yan Fu, ‘Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu’, 1899, p. 528.

<sup>90</sup> See ‘Remarks on Translation’, in Yan Fu (trans.), *Yuanfu*, p. 12.

<sup>91</sup> Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunxue Siyan*, p. 4. Gao Fengqian 高鳳謙, in his foreword to the revised edition of *Qunxue Siyan*, also criticized the current trend for everybody to engage in empty and uneducated talk about the administration of the society and remarked that Yan’s translation was a must-read on sociology for it pointed out the difficulties of and the need to study the subject. Ibid, pp. 1-2. In a letter to an editor in 1898, Yan remarked that the *Study of Sociology* was not an ordinary piece and required the translator to be learned in various subjects like mathematics, science, geography, botany and zoology. He also said that *A System of Synthetic Philosophy* would be a more formidable task. Yan Fu, ‘Yu Wang Kangnian Shu’ 與汪康年書 [Letter to Wang Kangnian], 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 506-07.

reference to Western models, Yan Fu was a sympathizer of the Hundred Day Reform in 1898.<sup>92</sup> At the height of the Reform, Yan Fu gained nomination for a diplomatic post and, in August, was summoned to present before the emperor his ten-thousand-word memorial released earlier in his newspaper, which conceivably reflected his long-frustrated wish of rendering service to the emperor.<sup>93</sup> But before he could see the emperor, the reforms were aborted. Yan was able to avoid implication mainly because he had all along distanced himself from the radical stances of the reform camp.<sup>94</sup> In his earlier letters to Liang Qichao, he had already suggested

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<sup>92</sup> The reform got its name because it only lasted for a hundred days from 11 June to 21 September 1898. Its main architect was Kang Youwei, who was granted a special appointment at the Zongli Yamen with the exceptional privilege of presenting memorials straight to the emperor without the need to go through bureaucratic channels. Under the blessing of the young Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (r. 1875-1908), the institutional reforms that Kang mapped out included educational reforms, a new constitution, a national assembly and Confucianism as the state religion. Kang's reform platform was vigorously upheld by his protégé Liang Qichao and supporter Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-1898), who were respectively bestowed with a sixth-rank and fourth-rank appointment during the Reform. The reform camp plotted a coup but was betrayed by General Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916), Li Hongzhang's protégé and influential general-official in the twilight of the Qing Dynasty. Their abrupt reforms were suppressed by the reigning reactionaries under the blessing of Empress Dowager Cixi. The emperor was kept under house arrest until his death. Liang and Kang went into exile to Japan. Six men were executed, including Tan Sitong and Kang's brother Kang Guangren 康廣仁 (1866-1898).

<sup>93</sup> Yan Fu, 'Nishang Huangdi Shu' 擬上皇帝書 [Proposed Memorial to the Emperor], 27 January-4 February 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 61-77. In the memorial, Yan began by asserting that there was nobody in the court capable of assisting the emperor to resist foreign enemies, and mal-administration was the major cause of China's aggravated weakness. Warning that China was no match for its foreign enemies, he proposed reforms to strengthen the people both physically and mentally in order to reconstruct a rich and powerful nation, the first and hardest step being to employ the right people who knew how to steer China in the modern world.

<sup>94</sup> Like Yan Fu, Kang Youwei was also interested in Confucianism, Daoism, Mahayana Buddhism and attempted to combine Chinese and Western learning. But before being influenced by Yan Fu's *Tiyanlun* in 1895, the monoglot's Western exposure came only from his visits to Shanghai and Hong Kong, where he became impressed by the Western establishment and translations by Jiangnan Arsenal and the Globe Magazine, which were confined to technical skills and basic facts about Western science,



boosting the people's intellect 民智, morality 民德 and physical strength 民力 through long-term and painstaking reforms enforcing beneficial Western codes and education.<sup>95</sup> While he wrote a poem to commemorate the six martyrs, he blamed reform masterminds Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao for insufficient grasp of

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politics and societies. See Winberg Chai, *The Political Thought of K'ang Yu-wei: A Study of its Origin and its Influence* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Dissertation Services, 1968), pp. 54-55; 'Nanhai Kang Xiansheng Zhuan' 南海康先生傳 [Biography of Kang Youwei from Nanhai County], in Liang Qichao, *Liang Qichao Quanji* 梁啟超全集 [Complete Works of Liang Qichao], 10 vols. (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe 北京出版社, 1999), I, pp. 481-97. Kang gathered a large following teaching traditional learning, elementary Western learning and reform thinking in his Ten Thousand Tree Cottage 萬木草堂 in Guangzhou in 1891. Known as 'the Kang camp', they founded various newspapers, societies and colleges to promote Western learning and foreign news, including 'Society for the Study of Self-Strengthening' 強學會, 'Natural Feet Society' 天足會, 'Confucian Society' 聖學會 and 'Southern Study College' 南學堂, etc. He attained the *jinshi* degree in 1895 but his various petitions to the emperor were intercepted before 1898. Kang was mainly influenced by the utilitarian school of statecraft, the Modern Text School of classical studies and the ideal of Confucian humanism. He first developed a unilinear evolutionary view of history in the 1890s, elaborated in his ideal of *datong* 大同 [Great Harmony], a kind of futuristic utopianism projecting the vision of moral-social progress combined with techno-economic advancement. Alluding to the unilinear evolutionary path of rite and polity (chaotic state 亂國 – well-off state 小康 – Great Harmony 大同) as exemplified in the *Gongyang* Commentaries 公羊傳 of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 and in the chapter 'Evolution of Rites' 禮運篇 of the *Classic of Rites* 禮記, Kang ascribed his vision to the authority of Confucius as a forward-looking reformer, asserting that some form of reform was required to lead China from disorder to peace, though the rationalization of a reform programme remained undefined. His utopia, in which all humans disbanded all conflicts caused by differences in nationality, familial role, race, sex, social class and economic status, which to him were the origin of human suffering, proved to be more a sensational ideological blend than a practical proposal. He started writing in 1884 but did not publish it until 1919 for fear of being banned for being too radical. Kang Youwei, *Datong Shu* 大同書 [On Great Unity] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1998; first publ. 1919). His other influential works, *Xinxue Weijing Kao* 新學偽經考 [An Inquiry into the Classics Forged during the Xin Period] (1891) and *Kongzi Gaizhi Kao* 孔子改制考 [Confucius as an Institutional Reformer] (1898), tried to conjure historical incidents as a pretext for his radical reforms.

<sup>95</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Liang Qichao Shu' 與梁啟超書 [Letter to Liang Qichao], October 1896, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 513-15.



European history, knowledge and the basic ideological constructs of modern Western democracy.<sup>96</sup> The background of the reformers was mainly Confucian and few of them knew a foreign language (Liang Qichao knew some Japanese).<sup>97</sup> According to Yan, their rash coup might lead to China's collapse since they incriminated the emperor and their own comrades and preempted possible steady reform by the

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<sup>96</sup> Liang Qichao was first exposed to Western learning in Shanghai in 1890 after failing the Metropolitan Examination. He then studied with Kang Youwei in Guangzhou and became his strongest adherent. As reflected in a letter, Liang was impressed by Yan's bold critiques, and he and his master were both greatly influenced by the ideas introduced in *Tianyanlun*. See Liang Qichao, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu' 致嚴復書 [Letter to Yan Fu], March, 1897, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1566-71. Liang founded several newspapers and presses, which became the mouthpiece of the reform camp. His political critiques were very popular, written in suave and accessible language. But as he himself noted, his translation approach was typical of an 'intellectually hungry' generation who rummaged for foreign ideas without much planning, selection or concern for readers' need, translating mainly for speed and ease from Japanese sources. He branded this 'Liang Qichao's style of import', which represented a kind of 'Westernization' incapable of showing the broader structure and organic development of Western learning, which was neither fish nor fowl and was no match for the systematic translation project of Yan Fu, who became 'the first returned student from the West to create an intellectual impact in China'. See Liang Qichao, *Qing Dai Xueshu Gailun* 清代學術概論 [Introduction to Qing Learning] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1998; first publ. 1920), pp. 97-98. Liang founded *Qingyibao* 清議報 [China Discussion] and *Xinmincongbao* 新民叢報 [The New People Miscellany] in exile to Yokohama and Yan also contributed to his papers.

<sup>97</sup> After repeated *keju* failures, Tan Sitong came into contact with new learning in 1893 in Shanghai where he befriended John Fryer and bought some translations on Western science, geography and politics published by the 'Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese' 廣學會, the most important missionary learning institution in late Qing. He befriended Liang Qichao in 1895 and came under the influence of Kang Youwei's Confucian evolutionary thinking. His most important work, *Renxue*, written in 1896-97, hypothesized a future egalitarian utopia defying the Confucian respect for authority and the servile three bonds (ruler-subordinate, father-son, elder brother-younger brother) in favour of people's rights, making him a more radical member of Kang's reform camp. It is noteworthy that Tan mentioned his desire for a Luther to reform Confucianism, the decline of which he attributed to authoritarian rulers and hypocritical Confucians. Tan Sitong 譚嗣同, *Renxue* 仁學 [On Humanity] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe (中州古籍出版社), 1998; first publ. 1899), p. 173.



emperor.<sup>98</sup>

This strengthened Yan's determination to educate the elite, the younger generation and those not in office about world affairs, which he thought would be essential to any cause, be it conservative or reformist.<sup>99</sup> His holistic strain and Western exposure told him that wealth and democracy were not built in one day. Understanding the importance of safeguarding individual assertion and personal freedom under an equitable legal system, he began translating *On Liberty* and *The Spirit of Laws*. His translation of the former was interrupted by the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, which represented a culmination of reaction to the failure of the Qing court to honour its reform promise after the brutal suppression of the Hundred Day Reform and its continued yielding to foreign powers.<sup>100</sup> The Rebellion showed Yan the dreadful destruction that could be caused by the unruly masses.<sup>101</sup>

Yan first translated *On Liberty* as *Ziyou Shiyi* 自繇釋義 [Explaining Liberty], having researched on the etymology of the word 'liberty' in both English and Chinese.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', 1899, p. 533.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 525.

<sup>100</sup> Yan fled Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion, which started as a patriotic uprising against foreign imperial powers, organized by a secret society whose members practiced boxing skills that they claimed would render them immune to bullets. The Boxers instigated the masses to attack European settlements and businesses in north-eastern China and later won the blessing of xenophobic Empress Dowager Cixi. This led to much disorder and angered the foreign powers. It finally ended with the storming of Beijing by an eight-country allied troop and the humiliating Boxer Indemnities in 1901.

<sup>101</sup> Yan questioned whether China would fall like India and Poland and be conquered by the White since Europeans seemed to be able to do the same things better than the Chinese. Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', 1901, p. 544.

<sup>102</sup> See 'Remarks on Translation' and 'Translator's Preface' in Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunji Quanjielun* 群己群界論 [On the Distinction of Rights between Group and Self] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural &

When the lost manuscript was rediscovered in 1903, he changed the title to *Qunji Quanjielun* 群己群界論 [On the Distinction of Rights between the Group and the Self] to emphasize the complementarity between the individual and the society. On a higher level, he found the complementarity between individual liberty and public good akin to the *Great Learning* principle of *jieju* 絜矩, that is, regulating one's conduct with a measuring square.<sup>103</sup> Confucian ethics stressed a kind of personalism by which the individual defined and delivered oneself in a web of reciprocal obligations with social, moral and political relations with others and was respected as an independent being without being set over against the state or society.<sup>104</sup> One duty of the Confucian gentleman was to help himself as well as others to achieve this kind of social and moral harmony. The Western concept of individualism was irrelevant in the Confucian tradition and this was probably why Yan Fu had to 'rectify' or distort the concept in his translation. He evidently valued Mill's tacit social bond over Rousseau's militant social contract and wanted to remind his readers of the paramountcy of social interest and order over personal right.<sup>105</sup> On the practical level,

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Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1903), pp. 1-6. Yan noted that liberty, similar in meaning to freedom, was derived from the name of the god *libertas*, denoting a concrete notion. That was why he translated liberty as *ziyou* 自繇, instead of the more abstract *ziyou* 自由, both being homophones meaning 'from'. Yan reasoned that while one could exercise unrestricted freedom living alone in a faraway land, one's freedom in society should be bound by the same of other people in society to avoid conflict and authoritarianism.

<sup>103</sup> See 'Remarks on Translation' in *ibid*, p. 2. See also Legge (trans.), *The Chinese/English Four Books*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>104</sup> See Wm. Theodore De Bary, *The Liberal Tradition in China* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1983).

<sup>105</sup> Yan criticized Rousseau's proposition of man's inborn freedom as a fallacy, since a new-born knows no rule and exercises no right over its own life and well-being. See 'Remarks on Translation' in Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunji Quanjielun*, p. 2. Mill argues that every member of a society should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the others in return for the social protection that one enjoys:



as Cohen suggests, given the Chinese problem context, the Western issue of the individual versus the state was not an issue at all for China – the Chinese issue was China versus the West.<sup>106</sup> To Yan, China at that point on the social evolutionary scale was not yet ready for modern Western superstructures and neither the conservatives nor reformers had sufficient understanding of liberty and democracy – the former feared and the latter abused the concepts.

Yan's change in title has been attacked as an indication of his retrogression from radicalism to conservatism.<sup>107</sup> But as his biographer shows, Yan was not opposed to democracy; he just believed that distortion and loose practice of such values would result in libertarianism and would be harmful to an underdeveloped country.<sup>108</sup> As he concentrated on translation after leaving Northern Sea Naval Academy in 1900 at the

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This conduct consists, first, in not injuring the interests of one another; or rather certain interests, which, either by express legal provision or by tacit understanding, ought to be considered as rights; and secondly, in each person's bearing his share (to be fixed on some equitable principle) of the labours and sacrifices incurred for defending the society or its members from injury and molestation. These conditions society is justified in enforcing at all costs to those who endeavour to withhold fulfillment...As soon as any part of a person's conduct affects prejudicially the interests of others, society has jurisdiction over it, and the question whether the general welfare will or will not be promoted by interfering with it, becomes open to discussion.

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 83-84.

<sup>106</sup> Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, p. 230. Cohen also argues that for Yan Fu, as well as for Wang Tao, the central issue was how best to generate Chinese national strength, rather than how to justify maximum individual liberty as an end in itself or as a means to the fullest possible development of the individual personality.

<sup>107</sup> Cai Yuanpei was probably the first to suggest that Yan started to turn from 'radical' to conservative in 1903. His views are still quoted even today. Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, 'Wushinian Lai Zhongguo Zhi Zhixue' 五十年來中國之哲學[Chinese Philosophy over the Last Fifty Years], in *Cai Yuanpei Quanjì* 蔡元培全集 [Complete Works of Cai Yuanpei], 7 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1964), IV, pp. 351-54.

<sup>108</sup> See Chen Baochen.

age of forty-six, he decided to translate *The Spirit of Laws*, dissatisfied with the conceptual and linguistic errors of an earlier translation.<sup>109</sup> Montesquieu's conception of a state being governed by effective law and a moderate government, whether republic or monarchical, and his appreciation of British parliamentary government certainly appealed to Yan's Confucian moral-political ideal and proneness to the British system.<sup>110</sup> Yan was inclined to Montesquieu's proposition that the form of government differs according to the political and social climate and circumstances of a place, so any relationship between liberty, morals and polity would depend on law, the effect of which may vary with time and space. He critiqued in his translation that reform on the Western model was necessary as the *dao* was invariably changing, but any reform ought to be gradual, given the immense difference between China and the West.<sup>111</sup>

Yan's conviction in gradual political change had a Darwinian bent and drew him to Edward Jenks' social evolutionary route charted in *A History of Politics*: from savage to patriarchal and then to modern political society (Yan translated the latter term as 'nation state' 國家社會 and 'military state' 軍國社會). He claimed that China had

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<sup>109</sup> See 'Zhi Xiong Jilian Shu', 1904, p. 47. According to Xiong Yuezhi, Zhang Xiangwen 張相文 translated *The Spirit of Laws* from Japanese as *Wenfa Jingli* 萬法精理 [Principles of Laws] six years before Yan and his was more popular than Yan's translation. Xiong Yuezhi, p. 700. Yan's translation came out between 1904 to 1909.

<sup>110</sup> In his added biography of Montesquieu, Yan claimed that the author's categorization of governments into republican, monarchical and despotic was not an alien practice in China, since there had been depiction about nine types of monarchical systems in *Shiji* 史記 [Historical Records]. See Yan Fu (trans.), *Fayi* 法意 [The Meaning of Laws], 2 vols. (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1904-1909), I, pp. 4-5. In a commentary to Chapter 6, Book XI, Yan recounted how he was deeply impressed by the fair and just court system in Britain sitting at a court hearing there. Ibid, pp. 276-77.



already changed from a savage society to a patriarchal society as early as the twentieth century BC, with rudimentary traces of a military state under a military despot in the Qin Dynasty, but it had not yet fully become a nation-state society at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>112</sup> He believed that revolutionary intervention could not step up the course of China's transition into a modern political society, which invariably depended on gradual and extensive education of the population.<sup>113</sup> That caused discord between Yan and revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen, who preferred a republican government rather than the 'milder' constitutional monarchy Yan favoured and labelled Yan as 'a thinker' while himself 'a practitioner'.<sup>114</sup> Yan was often criticized for his 'conservative' political stance after the 1920s. Had it been noted that the yardstick of historical and political prejudice is relative after all, they could have agreed to Wang Rongzu's discernment that Yan's insistence on

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<sup>111</sup> See Yan's commentary in Yan Fu (trans.), *Fayi*, II, p. 878.

<sup>112</sup> See 'Translator's Preface' in Yan Fu (trans.), *Shehui Tongquan* 社會通詮 [Exposition on Society] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1904), pp. 1, 6. Yan's friend Xia Zengyou compared the prehistoric bloom of civilization in China and its subsequent long period of stagnation with the relatively recent yet rapid development of modern European societies and attributed this to the close tie between faith/religion and politics. See foreword to *Shehui Tongquan*, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Xiong Chunru Shu' 與熊純如書 [Letters to Xiong Chunru], 1912-1921, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 602-717 (1913, p. 615).

<sup>114</sup> See Yan Qu (嚴璩), 'Houguan Yan Xiansheng Nianpu' 侯官嚴先生年譜 [Chronology of Mr Yan from Houguan], in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1545-52 (p. 1550). Yan met Sun Yat-sen during a London trip in 1905 working on a litigation case involving the Kaiping Mining Company 開平礦務局. He headed the company in Tianjin in 1901, but he mentioned in a letter that he did not have much say since personnel and financial matters were in the hands of the British. Yan Fu, 'Yu Wu Rulun Shu' 與吳汝綸書 [Letter to Wu Rulun], 1901, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 523-24. The company, opened in 1878, was among the largest and best-known enterprises in China first operated under the mode of 'government supervision and merchant management' 官督商辦. Ma Jianzhong suggested that the Kaiping mines were the only profitable and truly modern mines in China by the end of the nineteenth century. They then turned heavily in debt to foreigners and were taken over by a British company in 1900. Ma

constitutional monarchy would appear progressive or even radical by late Qing standards, but conservative or even reactionary in the Republican era.<sup>115</sup>

Yan was indeed more a thinker and an educator than a practitioner. He believed that certain Chinese epistemologies and methodologies ought to be reformed before institutional reforms could be feasible. Yan's bent toward positivism within a Darwinian framework drew him to J. S. Mill's inductive reasoning based on facts, which appealed to him as a scientific way of learning, an effective weapon in the struggle with nature, and a valid premise for deductive generalization. This appeared to be a marked contrast to certain indigenous tendencies that he considered unscientific, intuitive and leading to indolent and speculative practices, especially Idealism. His founding of the Logic Society 名學會 in Shanghai in 1900 and translation of J. S. Mill's *A System of Logic* reflected his strenuous effort in introducing a different mode of reasoning to supplement anagogic or bifocal Chinese logic with its concomitant impressionistic mode of expression. Yan sometimes transliterated logic as *luoji* 邏輯 but he seemed to prefer the substitution *mingxue* 名學 [lit. name; study].<sup>116</sup> Yan was overjoyed with the laborious exposition in *A*

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Jianzhong, *Strengthen the Country and Enrich the People*, p. 99; note 21.

<sup>115</sup> Wang Rongzu, 'Yan Fu Xinlun', p. 24.

<sup>116</sup> In a commentary preceding Section 2 of the Introduction, Yan examines the etymological root of logic, logos, comparing it to the Buddhist *atman* (universal soul), the Christian soul, Laozi's *dao*, Mecius' *xing* (nature) and considers the concept too broad to be embodied by any Chinese term other than *ming*. See Yan Fu (trans.), *Mill Mingxue* 穆勒名學 [Mill's Study of Logic] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1905), pp. 2-3. *Mingxue*, or the study of names, reminds one of the School of Names, a stream of thought that stressed syllogism and argumentation and was prominent alongside Confucianism and Daoism before the Han Dynasty. The School of Names was also called the School of Forms and Names or the Dialecticians, which was later dismissed by institutional Confucianism as indulging in sophistry at the expense of



*System of Logic* and suggested that the publication of its translation would provide an effective reference frame for Chinese thinking while rendering ninety percent of old Chinese propositions obsolete.<sup>117</sup> But he only managed to complete half of the work in 1900-1902 due to disturbances after the Boxer Rising, and senility precluded him from resuming translation.<sup>118</sup> It was not until 1908 that he translated another work on logic, upon request by his student Lü Bicheng 呂碧城 to teach the subject to her students. Within two months, Yan finished rendering W. S. Jevons' *Primer of Logic*, which occurred to him to be a shorter and suitable textbook.<sup>119</sup>

By 1910 Yan had completed his major translations critiquing Western works that he deemed fundamental to modernizing the Chinese reference frame, though he continued to deliver his thought in lectures and newspapers.<sup>120</sup> Developing his earlier eclecticism, he was to offer more in-depth analysis of world affairs and ideologies as well as concrete suggestions on the betterment of China.<sup>121</sup> His intention to reform

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ethics and harmony. Most of their works have been lost. For a concise understanding, see Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. by Derk Bodde, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973; first publ. 1953), I, pp. 192-220.

<sup>117</sup> See Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', 1901, p. 546. Yan said he was thrilled in spite of this exhausting job and deplored that although there was a sea of Western works to be translated, he knew few translators up to the task, at least in twenty years.

<sup>118</sup> See translator's preface to Yan Fu (trans.), *Mingxue Qianshuo* 名學淺說 [Elementary Study of Logic] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1909), p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> Yan's translation was also prescribed by the Education Bureau as reference material for the Normal College. See back flap of Yan Fu, *Tianyanlun* (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1917).

<sup>120</sup> Yan had said earlier that writing and lecturing were what supported his big family. See Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', 1905, pp. 554-55. In 1904, he released the first critical analysis of English grammar in Chinese: *Yingwen Hangu* 英文漢詁 [A Chinese Dictionary of the English Language].

<sup>121</sup> Yan's major critiques during the early twentieth century include: 'Yuan Bai' 原敗 [Whence Failure], 'Yuan Pin' 原貧 [Whence Poverty], 'Shu Hegel Weixinlun' 述黑格爾惟心論 [Hegelian

the minds of the elite had never ceased. After the abolition of *keju* in 1905, he wrote extensively on active proposals for a better education system.<sup>122</sup> In his translation of Alfred Westharp's writing on Chinese education, he suggested that the best education system for China should not be a blind copying of Western missionary education, as Japan and India had done, but should combine the essentials of the Confucian and Montessori education methods.<sup>123</sup> In the preface to his published lectures on politics, he insisted that world changes, even though resultant from the cosmic process, were dependent upon new learning and reform hinged not on rash and shallow people but

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Idealism], 'Yiqian Jiubaiwu Nian Huanying Dashi Zongshu' 一千九百五年寰瀛大事總述 [Summary of World Affairs in 1905], 'Xianfa Dayi' 憲法大義 [The Essence of Constitution], 'Zhuke Pingyi' 主客評議 [Debate between a Host and His Guest] (this piece analyzes the absence of democracy and human rights in China), 'Yu Waijiaobao Zhuren Shu' 與“外交報”主人書 [Letter to the Editor of *Foreign Affairs Journal*] (this piece examines a variety of topics from education, politics, reform, translation and the importance of introducing Western learning to supplement, instead of substitute, Chinese learning). See *Yan Fu Ji*, I, 115-21, 157-65, 170-78, 210-18, 238-46; II, 292-95; III, 557-65.

<sup>122</sup> Such critiques include, 'Lun Jinri Jiaoyu Yingyi Wuli Kexue Wei Dangwu Zhiji' 論今日教育應以物理科學為當務之急 [Physics and Science are Top Priority for Today's Education], 'Lun Jiaoyu Yu Guojia Zhi Guanxi' 論教育與國家之關係 [On the Relationship between Education and the State], 'Jiaoyu Shiye' 實業教育 [Education in Practice] and 'Lun Xiaoxue Jiaoyu Jiyi Shending' 論小學教科書亟宜審定 [On the Pressing Need to Validate Primary Textbooks]. See *Yan Fu Ji*, I, 115-21, 157-64, 166-78, 199-218; II, pp. 238-46, 278-86, 292-95; III, 557-65.

<sup>123</sup> See Yan Fu, 'Zhongguo Jiaoyu Yi' 中國教育議 [Discussion on Chinese Education], 1914, in *Yan Fu Weikan Shiwen Hangao Ji Sanyi Zhuyi* 嚴復未刊詩文函稿及散佚著譯 [Unpublished Poems and Essays and Lost Translations of Yan Fu], ed. by Lin Zaijue 林載爵 (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998), pp. 263-97. Yan added nine commentaries and three notes in his translation. The following note was appended to the main title: On the method of merging the education [systems] of the East and West, submitted to the Beijing Central Education Commission on the tenth day of the first [lunar] month in the third year of the Republic [1914] (my translation and brackets). The title of the source is not certain, but Yan mentioned in the beginning commentary that he decided to introduce Westharp after learning that the Jewish German scholar wanted to contribute something to China and he was amazed, after reading his work, that a foreign educator and later diplomat should have such a high opinion of Confucius, even though he did not agree entirely with what he said.



poised and tactful talents, showing his persistent elitist bent and scorn toward the reformers and revolutionaries.<sup>124</sup>

Having emerged as a venerable thinker conversant in both Chinese and Western learning, Yan was frequently enlisted for public service. In 1902, he was named Chief Editor of the translation department of the Metropolitan University 京師大學堂.<sup>125</sup> In 1906, he was temporary Chancellor of the former of Shanghai Fudan University 復旦公學, Superintendent of Anqing Normal College 安慶師範學堂 and examiner of returned graduates from overseas. In 1909 he was appointed to oversee the standardization of terminology and advise on the translation of constitutional and financial materials for the central government and served as advisor for Fujian province. In recognition of his achievement, the Qing court conferred upon him the highest *jinshi* degree of arts in 1909, and in the following year, the designation of 'senior statesman' 資政院議員, 'honorary Confucian scholar' 碩學通儒 and 'deputy commander of the navy' 海軍協都統, the latter for his assistance in the standardization of the navy and compilation of naval chronicles.

The toppling of the Qing Dynasty in the 1911 Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen shocked the moderate reformer. He was disillusioned by the associated carnage and the

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<sup>124</sup> In 1906 alone, Yan gave eight lectures on politics to the Shanghai Youth Association 上海青年會 and one on the essence of constitution in Anhui Higher College 安徽高等學堂, the notes of which were published the same year. See Yan Fu (trans.), *Zhengzhi Jiangyi* 政治講義 [Lecture Notes on Politics] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1906).

<sup>125</sup> Working with Yan were his mentor Wu Rulun 吳汝綸 (1840-1903), renowned fiction translator Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), Zeng Zonggong 曾宗輦, Wei Yi 魏易 and Yan's eldest son Yan Qu 嚴

ensuing internecine battles between warlords, which strayed increasingly from his blueprint of a modern, orderly and rejuvenated China.<sup>126</sup> Ironically, the revolutionaries had reformulated his evolutionary theory to their advantage: the Manchu court was proven unfit to rule and thus ought to be eliminated. His letters to his mentee Xiong Chunru from 1912 to 1921 best reflect his mindset at this stage.<sup>127</sup> Deeply worried that many from the revolutionary camp lacked education and experience for state administration, which required cautious planning and gradual implementation, he openly expressed a wish to return to the monarchical system, as he insisted that the people were not yet morally, physically or intellectually fit for Western constructs, especially real democracy and unrestrained freedom.<sup>128</sup> His Darwinian sense prompted him to support whom he perceived to be the fittest ruler at the time and what he believed to be the fittest methods to reform China. Yuan Shikai's iron fist and command over the army appeared to Yan as the temporary alternative to unite the nation in its struggle out of imminent collapse in transition to a modern state, even though he was fully aware that he was not the best choice.<sup>129</sup>

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據, who, like his father, also went to Britain to study in 1895.

<sup>126</sup> Sun Yat-sen failed to harness the rival warlords after the 1911 Revolution and Yuan Shikai, opportunistic general who had control over the army, became first President of the Republican government. But China continued to be plagued by Japanese aggression, civil wars and several aborted attempts at restoration, by Yuan Shikai in 1915, by another warlord Zhang Xun 張勳 in 1917, and by dethroned last Emperor Xuantong 宣統 in 1917 supported by Kang Youwei.

<sup>127</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Xiong Chunru Shu'. Xiong Chunru was a cousin of Yan's favourite pupil Xiong Jilian 熊季廉.

<sup>128</sup> Yan expressed his grave concern about the chaotic and corrupted Republic. He was also wary about the teething problems of the new education system. He considered autocracy better than the present lack of order and direction. To him, the revolutionaries and their party Kuomintang were reckless and destructive and the Republic existed in name only. Ibid, 1912-1915, pp. 602-20.

<sup>129</sup> Yan told Xiong Chunru that Yuan Shikai was just a lesser evil than the reactionary old camp and the anarchical revolutionary front. Although he was just a dictator general from the old system without



Afterall, to Yan, there were no hard and fast rules whether to adopt the Chinese way or Western way and the gentry must change with the times, until the highest excellence 至善 envisioned in *The Great Learning* is reached.<sup>130</sup>

Yan's stance toward the opportunistic general was ambivalent, assisting him in public service but never affirming unreserved support. He served as Acting Chancellor of the Metropolitan University cum Dean of Arts Faculty in 1912 (he resigned soon afterward), legal and foreign affairs advisor, senator 參議院參議, elected member of the legislative meeting 約法會議議員 and translator of the gist of the First World War for the President House 居仁日覽 in 1914. The following year, he was appointed, together with Liang Qichao, member of the drafting committee of the Constitution of the Republic of China, Yuan's camouflage to his restoration of kingship. Yan had placed his bet on the autocratic general, and was forced to subscribe to his preparatory committee for restoration 籌安會, but he declined the general's bribe to refute Liang's critique of his manipulation of the Constitution.<sup>131</sup> When Yuan died in 1916 after his failed restoration, all subscribers to the preparatory committee were put under arrest except Yan Fu. It is important to note that while Yan supported and refused to refute Liang's denunciation of Yuan, he persisted with his blame on the reformer camp for their short-sightedness, bias and greed leading up to

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the necessary vision, scientific knowledge or intellectual capacity to rival the strong foreign powers, a strong leadership would be in the interest of the public. Ibid, 1915, pp. 623-24.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 1913, p. 615.

<sup>131</sup> Yan told his mentee that he was almost coerced to have his name on the subscriber list for Yuan's restoration. He regretted he did not insist on rejection, for the safety of his family and for fear that unseating Yuan would lead to more turmoil or even the country's subjugation by foreign powers. He confessed that he did not persuade Yuan to abandon his plan out of love for his country, rather than

the present disorder and insisted that the preservation of an independent China preceded any other concern under the current crisis.<sup>132</sup> He was especially wary of Liang's dangerous influence on simple-minded youngsters, on student sympathizers of Rousseau and on precarious officials, likening his recklessness and irreparable devastation to Faust, and quoted Machiavelli and Treitschke to explain that for politics, the end justifies the means.<sup>133</sup>

The above history tends to show that Yan Fu had a more balanced perspective and keener vision than most contemporary intellectuals. It also shows that he was a magnanimous gentleman upholding his own faith and what he believed to be true prejudices. Since his mid years, Yan had spared no efforts advocating the abandonment of traditional vices and the introduction of useful Western constructs to

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affection for the general. Ibid, 1915, 1916, pp. 627, 631.

<sup>132</sup> In a long letter to Xiong Chunru, Yan reasoned that had it not been for rash reform and a reckless coup, the emperor might have been able to avoid clashing with the empress dowager and initiate effective reforms after her death and benefit the country. He censured Kang's stubbornness and especially Liang's extremist and irresponsible critiques, inciting the mass toward murder and destruction, blindly clamouring for the substitution of monarchy by parliamentary government and ignorant of the fundamental differences between Chinese and Western systems and of the fact that monarchy and government were inseparable in China. He knew that their drastic substitution of Chinese systems by indiscriminate copying of the West was hardly feasible or comprehensive. He quoted Thomas More (1478-1535) – that politics was just a choice of the lesser evil – to explain that they could engage Yuan Shikai and try to check him with a constitution, until the people and the state were fit enough for a republic. He also cited Victor Hugo – that it was most dangerous to have linear thinking in a revolutionary age – to illustrate the harmful influence of Liang's shallow and changeable views under his articulate, accessible but spiteful pen. Ibid, 1916, pp. 630-34.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 1916, pp. 645-47; 1917, p. 661. Hao Chang also suggests that Liang's radical statements in newspapers for moral renovation and complete destruction of the past were often more rhetorical than serious but nevertheless exercised enormous impact on the younger generation. Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 301.



modernize the imperfect Chinese system and to rejuvenate worthy primordial Confucian doctrines. Back in 1898, he had already claimed that ‘there can be no *dao* without a state and a people to sustain itself’ and was keen to preserve both the state and its inalienable faith, lest any reformation or rejuvenation agenda would just be futile.<sup>134</sup> In 1899, he tried to pacify Wu Rulun’s worry about the fate of traditional Chinese learning by stating that both new (Western) and old (Chinese) learning should be adopted, for contrast and comparison with another system could bring constructive streamlining and consolidation.<sup>135</sup> As he matured in his later years, he seemed more focused on the latter cause, partly out of a necessity to mend the destructive prejudices of the newer generation. He actively promoted Confucian virtues and the inclusion of Confucian ethics and literature in school education.<sup>136</sup> In 1913 he joined former colleagues Kang Youwei, Liang Qicaho, Lin Shu and Xia Zengyou to subscribe to the Confucian Society 孔教會, advocating reverence to Confucius and Confucian classics as a means to appreciate beneficial traditional values and consolidate national identity for the higher goal of national reformation.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Yan Fu, ‘Nishang Huangdi Wanyan Shu’.

<sup>135</sup> Wu Rulun, ‘Zhi Yan Fu Shu’ 致嚴復書 [Letters to Yan Fu], 1896-1901, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1559-66.

<sup>136</sup> Yan’s essays in favour of Confucianism in 1913-14 include: ‘Sigu Tan’ 思古談 [Remembrance of the Old]; ‘Lun Guohui Yiyuan Xuyou Shijunzi Zhi Feng’ 論國會議員須有士君子之風 [Members of the Parliament Must Possess Demeanor of the Confucian Gentry Gentleman]; ‘Dujing Dang Jiji Tichang’ 讀經當積極提倡 [The Reading of Classics Must be Actively Promoted]; ‘Daoyang Zhonghua Minguo Ligu Jingsheng Yi’ 導揚中華民國立國精神議 [Appeal for Upholding the Founding Spirit of the People’s Republic of China]. See *Yan Fu Ji*, II, pp. 322-26, 329-33, 342-45.

<sup>137</sup> Kang Youwei even proposed enacting Confucianism as the state religion in the Constitution. According to Elman, Kang’s effort represents a form of ‘symbolic compensation’ paid to classical literati for the historical failure of Confucianism by unilaterally upholding its eternal moral superiority, which reminds us of the surviving Han Chinese literati upholding the high moral value of Neo-Confucianism after the fall of the Song Dynasty to a Mongol regime. Elman, *A Cultural History of*

Yan remarked that he was against categorical denunciation of the Chinese tradition and that his view of the *dao* was fairly similar to Kang Youwei; he even bet that China's possible preservation would lie in its millennia-old moral teachings.<sup>138</sup> Being highly eclectic and sharing Spencer's evolutionary optimism, Yan believed in a bright future for China and Confucianism, hoping that history would straighten out and all vices would eventually be eliminated in the process of evolution. While claiming that Confucian classics and histories were most enduring and invaluable, he regretted that it was necessary to 'unearth and refine' their quintessence through 'new machinery', that is, Western epistemology and methodologies.<sup>139</sup> But he did not blindly believe in a perfect West. He saw Germany's manipulation of the tenet of evolutionary progress as nonsensical pretext for its aggression against other countries and in fact a cursed attempt to counter the law of natural elimination.<sup>140</sup> His reflection on European history and the First World War suggested to him that three hundred years of remarkable evolution in the West only ended in war and degeneration, while Confucian ethics still reigned high on earth, a view that was increasingly gaining ground in European societies.<sup>141</sup> In this case, Confucian ethics and its emphasis on man's harmony with nature which were in want in the West might as well

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*Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p. 594.

<sup>138</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Xiong Chunru Shu', 1917, pp. 660-62, 677-68. Actually Yan stated clearly that he was against obliteration of the Chinese tradition as early as 1901. See also 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', pp. 539-41.

<sup>139</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Xiong Chunru Shu', 1917, pp. 666-68; 'Lun Jinri Jiaoyu Yingyi Wuli Kexue Wei Dangwu Zhiji', in *Yan Fu Ji*, II, pp. 285-86.

<sup>140</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Xiong Chunru Shu', 1915, p. 622.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 1918, pp. 689-92.



complement the latter's obsession with science.<sup>142</sup> In his preface to his translation of Westharp in 1914, he remarked that even though the author's educational proposals might not be totally practicable and he did not agree with everything he said; he concurred with his exaltation of Confucian virtues such as learning for the sake of one's self, the importance of intuitive reflection and consistency in speech and act.<sup>143</sup>

When the May Fourth Movement broke out in 1919, shattering the authority of the traditional culture and socio-political system, he disapproved of the students' demonstration, though he sympathized with their nationalism.<sup>144</sup> His Darwinian sense reassured him that China's preservation lay with the educated gentry instead of students or the masses; he did not agree with the May Fourth leaders who were renegade to Confucianism, 'old ethics, old culture, old language and old teachings' and believed in a French model of revolution and unconditional copying of 'science

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<sup>142</sup> Liang Qichao came to a similar conclusion in his critique 'Kexue Wanneng Zhi Meng' 科學萬能之夢 [A Dream about the Omnipotence of Science], in *Liang Qichao Quanjì*, V, pp. 2972-74. Liang made it clear in the endnote that he did not mean to say science was bankrupt, but just that it was not almighty.

<sup>143</sup> Yan Fu (trans.), 'Zhongguo Jiaoyu Yi', p. 263.

<sup>144</sup> The May Fourth nationalistic and new culture movement was an important watershed in modern Chinese intellectual history. Led by iconoclastic intellectuals Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1880-1942) and Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), young intellectuals protested against Japanese aggression and called for sweeping reform of traditional values and institutions, attacking Confucianism as an origin of vices. They exalted Western ideas, particularly science and democracy, taking an interest in liberalism, pragmatism, nationalism, anarchism and socialism, and clamoured for replacing the classical language with the vernacular style. The protests culminated on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1919 when students and teachers in Beijing held a mass demonstration against the Versailles Peace Conference for its unfair treatment of China and against the Chinese government's acquiescence to the treaty. It soon sparked off nationwide protests involving also merchants, workers and the masses, forcing the Cabinet to resign and the government to refuse endorsing the peace treaty. The movement spurred the abandonment of traditional ethics, literature, writing code and family system. It also led to reorganization of the

and democracy'.<sup>145</sup> As before, he believed that Rousseauistic democracy and equality, once a prevalent ideology, had been proven wrong and destructive even in Europe, so its introduction to China was unimaginable.<sup>146</sup> He was also cautious of the rise of Communism in Eastern Europe and its following among May Fourth intellectuals, but he predicted that such 'savagery' would not prevail in China; to him, what the 'extremist party' advocated resembled more an autocratic polity than a liberal and equal society, desperate to drive all capitalists into equal poverty and was even worse than the (French) revolution.<sup>147</sup> Yan's prediction was proven wrong but ironically, if not regrettably, his discernment was not. When Yan Fu died in Fuzhou in 1921, bidding farewell to a Chinese republic in dismal chaos, he left behind a will proclaiming his lifelong faith in personal cultivation and evolutionary optimism: when the self conflicts with the group, submit the self to the group; old codes wax and wane, but they will not be totally disbanded and China will survive ultimately.<sup>148</sup>

This brief biographical sketch portrays a confident and eclectic non-conformist and non-partisan with a vision, who remained undaunted throughout in criticizing what he considered to be weaknesses of an almost inviolable tradition, to be supplemented by fitter Western doctrines, and in defending what he regarded as beneficial ontological values of his own tradition, to be rejuvenated using the Western methods that he introduced and critiqued through translation. Nevertheless there has been a tendency

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Kuomintang and stimulated the birth of the Chinese Communist Party.

<sup>145</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Xiong Chunru Shu', 1919, pp. 698-700. In this letter, Yan also blamed the ignorant masses for abusing their rights and the press for misrepresentation and sensationalism.

<sup>146</sup> Wang Quchang, *Yan Jidao Nianpu*, pp. 115-16.

<sup>147</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Xiong Chunru Shu', 1919, pp. 703-04.

<sup>148</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yizhu' 遺囑 [Will], 1921, in *Yan Fu Ji*, II, pp. 359-360. Yan's health deteriorated from asthma in 1915, which he associated with his earlier addiction to opium.



for critics to focus on the criticizing strain in his mid years, being drawn to the more poignant aspects of his critiques and translations rather than his eclectic subtext. Similarly there is a tendency to overlook his defending strain in his mellow years, failing to appreciate his underlying persistency to rejuvenate the Confucian-based Chinese tradition.

Zhou Zhenfu categorically divides Yan Fu's thinking and behaviour into three periods: all-out Westernization after the Sino-Japanese War, followed by eclectic mediation between Chinese and Western thinking after the Hundred Day Reform, and finally retrogressive restoration after the Republican Revolution.<sup>149</sup> Along a similar line, Yan's biographer Wang Shi describes his opposition to political revolution and the new culture movement in his late years as 'reactionary and characteristic of the submissive bourgeoisie in semi-feudal and quasi-colonial China'.<sup>150</sup> Hao Chang comments that Yan Fu was 'iconoclastic' like Liang Qichao, 'an unreservedly ardent admirer of Western civilization', who thought 'the remedy to China's ills lay only in Western ideas and values' and 'almost completely refuted the indigenous trends of thought in his own time', dismissing 'all the current schools of Confucianism as intellectual waste.'<sup>151</sup> Their portrayal of a changeable Yan dominated studies in the field of translation literature in China until the end of the twentieth century.

However, as argued above, there is certainly a strain of consistency throughout Yan's speech and acts. He did not refrain from valuing certain Confucian values in his early

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<sup>149</sup> See Zhou Zhenfu.

<sup>150</sup> *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 6-7.

<sup>151</sup> Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907*, p. 85; 'Intellectual Change and the Reform Movement, 1890-8', pp. 298-99.

critiques and translations; nor did he abandon his insistence on science and freedom in his late years. This point is increasingly recognized in the past couple of years.

Ouyang Zhesheng holds that Yan maintained a kind of rational, balanced and eclectic attitude toward both Chinese and Western culture, and his later reflection is a result of more profound understanding at a higher level of the two systems.<sup>152</sup> Lin Qiyan shares a similar view, suggesting that Yan's comprehensive reflection on both systems in his later years was in fact supplementation and perfection of his earlier study. Yan sought to inherit not only worthy Confucian tenets but also Daoist, Mohist and Legalist tenets through streamlining, adaptation and reinterpretation according to modern existential situations.<sup>153</sup> Lam praises Yan as the first intellectual to attempt broad cross-cultural comparison and to offer the most discerning judgement before the 1920s, laying the seeds of related discussions in the 1920s and 1930s and enlightening the ensuing Neo-Confucian movement.<sup>154</sup>

Furthermore, again argued above, the distinction between conservatism and radicalism is relative, and it only makes sense to gauge one's stance against one's own existential situation. If Yan Fu is conservative, then Schwartz has already observed that his conservative bent is traceable in his earliest writings.<sup>155</sup> Yan's inclination to Spencer's, Mill's, Montesquieu's and Machiavelli's attitudes to science,

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<sup>152</sup> Ouyang Zhesheng 歐陽哲生, *Yan Fu Pingzhuan* 嚴復評傳 [A Critique of Yan Fu] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou Wenyi Chubanshe 百花洲文藝出版社, 1994). Ouyang remarks that Yan's refutation of Rousseau represents his criticism of the French Romantic tradition from the perspective of the Anglo-American tradition on freedom. He thinks Wang Shi's criticism is a leftist political statement.

<sup>153</sup> Lin Qiyan 林啓彥, 'Yen Fu's Viewpoints on Sino-Western Culture in the May Fourth Period' = 五四時期嚴復的中西文化觀, *Chinese Studies* = 漢學研究, 14:2 (1996), 75-89.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, pp. 212-36. But Schwartz still thinks that Yan is bent



society and politics, and his trust in the educated gentry over the students and the masses are certainly elitist. Yet his insistence on gradual, peaceful and long-term systematic reform is still a path along which his country is proceeding today, after a century of internal and external disruption.<sup>156</sup> Even May Fourth leader Hu Shi pointed out that at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, few Chinese, whether conservative or reformist, but especially those who claimed to be the ‘new people’, dared to speak against ‘science’ even though they had no idea what a scientific worldview meant or what science could achieve when applied to human life.<sup>157</sup> Invariably Yan’s persistent faith in evolutionary progress and orderly governance under the administration of strict laws as well as the assertion of personal freedom and containment of personal right for the overall benefit of the nation represents his existential prejudice as much as his vision.

Zhang Hengshou comes to a similar conclusion analyzing Yan’s 1898 critiques ‘Daoxue Waizhuan’ 道學外傳 [Unofficial Biography of a Confucian Pedant] and ‘Daoxue Waizhuan Yuyi’ 道學外傳餘義 [Sequel to Unofficial Biography of a Confucian Pedant], which have been widely interpreted as his straight refutation of Confucianism.<sup>158</sup> According to Zhang, Yan was free from the prevailing political bias

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toward the Chinese tradition in his later years.

<sup>156</sup> This slogan appeared on a float in the parade in Tiananmen Square in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, ‘prosperous and peaceful development of the state through science and education’ 科教興國，和平發展。

<http://www.people.com.cn/item/ldhd/Jiangzm/1999/jianghuahome.html>

<sup>157</sup> Hu Shi, “‘Kexue Yu Renshengguan’ Xu” ‘科學與人生觀’序 [Foreword to ‘Science and Philosophy of Life’], in *Hu Shi Wencun* 胡適文存 [Essays by Hu Shi], 4 vols. (Taipei: Yuandong Tushu Gongsi 遠東圖書公司, 1979; first publ. 1922), II, pp. 120-154.

<sup>158</sup> Zhang Hengshou 張恆壽, ‘Yan Fu Duiyu Dangdai Daoxuejia He Wang Yangming Xueshuo De

of categorical denouncement of Song metaphysics and he clearly mentioned that his attack was directed at ‘pseudo’ or ‘pedantic’ Confucians who failed to transmit the Confucian heritage and acknowledged that the best Neo-Confucian masters of the Song Dynasty were upright and venerable scholars beneficial to the country.<sup>159</sup> (Yan was to hold a similar view in a later article about a Song Idealist master in 1906.<sup>160</sup>) Zhang reasons that Yan’s in-depth criticism of the two major streams of Song metaphysics, Rationalism and Idealism, reflects his profound understanding of the subject matter.<sup>161</sup> He also points out that Yan possessed a rare talent in his era for

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Pinglun’ 嚴復對於當代道學家和王陽明學說的評論 [Yan Fu’s Criticism of Contemporary Scholars of the School of Study of the Dao and Wang Yangming’s Idealist Thinking], in *Yan Fu Sixiang Xinlun*, ed. by Liu Guisheng, Lin Qiyan and Wang Xianming, pp. 3-16.

<sup>159</sup> Zhang points out that the non-Han Manchu court was wary about Song scholar’s distinction between the Han race and ‘barbarian’ race and sponsored colossal academic research projects to engage the intellectuals in passive studies and biased critiques of Song tenets. Yan was the only contemporary scholar besides Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1896-1936) to abstain from political accusation and distinguish between ‘true’ and ‘pseudo’ Confucians. However, Yan’s arguments are deeper and more critical, for he saw the sincerity and scholarship of the Song masters as necessary virtues for survival in a modern world. According to Zhang Hengshou, Yan applied the concept of evolutionary progress in assessing the relative merits of Song metaphysical methodologies and preferred the Rationalists’ insistence on the investigation of things for the extension of knowledge to the Idealists’ insistence on passive reflection of the mind for restoration of pure concepts.

<sup>160</sup> Yan Fu, ‘*Yangming Xiansheng Jiyao Sanzhong Xu*’ “陽明先生集要三種”序 [Preface to *Three Works from the Anthology of Wang Yangming*], in *Yan Fu Ji*, II, pp. 237-38.

<sup>161</sup> For Neo-Confucianism, see, for example, Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, II, pp. 533-92. Neo-Confucianism is an idealist philosophy that became dominant during the Song and Ming Dynasties as a reaction to Buddhism and Daoism with intensive borrowing from the two. The central premise is that the universe has two aspects: the metaphysical form, or *li* 理 [principle], which is a network of natural laws constituting the Supreme Ultimate or *dao*; and the matter, or *qi* 氣 [pneuma], which acts on *li* to produce things, or *qi* 器 [instrument]. The pursuit of *dao* starts with, as exemplified in *Great Learning*, the investigation of things (*gewu*) 格物 for extension of knowledge (*zhizhi*) 致知. Different approaches to the attainment of the *dao* has resulted in two major branches of Neo-Confucianism: Rationalism 理學 [Study of the Principle] and Idealism 心學 [Study of the Mind]. The first school, associated with Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1108) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200),



giving sharp but fair criticism of Confucian tenets with reference to Western tenets due to his deeper understanding of the Western conceptual grid, avoiding traditional misunderstanding of Western propositions or radical Westernization at the expense of traditional culture, many such criticisms being embedded in the commentaries of his translations, such as of Montesquieu and Huxley.<sup>162</sup>

Zhang's view finds echo with Li Zehou, who agrees that the translator's understanding of the capitalistic West on a philosophical level is far deeper than his contemporaries, who could only grasp Western knowledge up to the level of natural science or liberal tenets.<sup>163</sup> He also comments that translations by the revolutionaries and other political camps after him, covering ideas such as inborn human rights and the social contract, which he opposed, did not surpass him in terms of overall mastery

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holds that the principle *li* is equivalent to *xing* 性 [the nature of things]. The constant investigation of the nature of things, mainly through the study of ethical principles and core Confucian classics, is necessary for the attainment of metaphysical knowledge (*zhizhi*). The second school, associated with Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529), maintains that the principle *li* is equivalent to *xin* (心) [the mind]. The constant investigation of the mind, mainly through inner reflection and self education, is equivalent to knowing what is right (*zhengshi*) 正事 and thus necessary for the restoration of the original purity of the mind or inborn goodness of man (*zhi liangzhi*) 致良知.

<sup>162</sup> Zhang Hengshou.

<sup>163</sup> Li Zehou 李澤厚, 'Lun Yan Fu' 論嚴復 [On Yan Fu], first publ. 1977, in *Zhongguo Sixiangshi Lun* 中國思想史論 [On the History of Chinese Thought], 3 vols. (Anhui: Wenyi Chubanshe 文藝出版社, 1999), II, pp. 580-615. Li says that earlier Westernizers like Wei Yuan and Zheng Guanying failed to offer theoretical rationalization for their itemized reform proposals, while that offered by reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao was shallow and not well-focused. Yan Fu's translation represented a marked move in modern China to introduce a new capitalist culture and a world view effecting unprecedented consequences not only on his contemporaries but also, more importantly, on the younger generations of patriots and revolutionaries to come, including Lu Xun and Mao Zedong. But Li still suggests that Yan utterly reverted to 'feudalism' in his later years and betrayed his earlier 'passion' in Western learning.

of intellectual tenets.<sup>164</sup> It is true that Yan's introduction of a new capitalist culture from the West became the most important source of enlightenment in China for decades before being replaced by Communism. Jiang Linxiang, in his discussion of Yan as a figure in contemporary Confucian history, also remarks that Yan's criticism of traditional learning on a philosophical level, comparing Chinese and Western epistemologies and substituting modern empirical and inductive methodologies, was deeper and much broader in perspective than other reform advocates.<sup>165</sup> Translation of Western works of all types increased tremendously after 1895 but it was Yan's translations of intellectual works that were best remembered. He Zhaowu suggests that Yan Fu's sole undertaking of *Evolution and Ethics*, *Wealth of Nations*, *Spirit of Laws* and *System of Logic* was more successful in addressing the needs and aspirations of his time than all the works produced by the bulk of 'imperialists' (that is, missionaries) and Westernization officials in the previous thirty years.<sup>166</sup>

The reason why Yan had been perceived as wavering between radicalism and conservatism probably lies in his being a non-partisan with a long-term vision, which is not so easily gauged by those in their own existential trappings. One trapping concerns the beguiling nature of the concept of 'reform'. It should be noted that in late Qing, different people had different agendas for 'reform', or *bianfa* 變法, which literally means 'a change of methods' in Chinese. For the official Westernization

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid, p. 590.

<sup>165</sup> Jiang Linxiang 姜林祥, *Zhongguo Ruxueshi (Jindai Juan)* 中國儒學史(近代卷) [A History of Confucianism in China (Contemporary Chapter)] (Guangzhou: Guangdong Jiaoyu Chubanshe 廣東教育出版社, 1998), pp. 187-92.

<sup>166</sup> He Zhaowu 何兆武, 'Guangxuehui De Xixue Yu Weixinpai' 廣學會的西學與維新派 [The Reform Camp and Western Learning of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General



camp, the methods to be changed mainly concerned technical and scientific skills, manufacturing and military machinery, what they categorically scorned as 'instrumental' and secondary to Confucian social and moral-political constructs. Yan's Western exposure told him this was preposterous. For Kang Youwei and his reform camp, a change of methods involved instant institutional and constitutional changes to be idealistically grafted upon traditional social and moral fabrics. Yan's vision told him this was impracticable and short-sighted. As to the Republican revolutionaries and May Fourth students, many of whom were to become the faithful of Communism, a mere change of methods was simply reactionary compared to their call to overturn history and tradition. Yan's elitist evolutionary strain foretold disaster and anarchy. Schwartz claims that China's response to the West before the end of the nineteenth century took place within a framework of concepts and categories furnished by the Chinese tradition.<sup>167</sup> This is clearly a fair observation, but Schwartz still underestimates Yan's ambition to rejuvenate the Confucian-based Chinese tradition.<sup>168</sup>

Du Weiming traces a post-1895 tendency for intellectuals to simplify the three-dimensional question concerning the inheritance of the Chinese tradition, first to a two-dimensional question (encapsulated in the substance-application conception of

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Knowledge Among the Chinese], *Lishi Yanjiu* 歷史研究 [Historical Studies], 4 (1961), 21-44.

<sup>167</sup> Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 6.

<sup>168</sup> Schwartz notes Yan's ability to seize upon what he found congenial from the West and rejected the rest. He also discerns, for example, that even though Yan saw Mill's deductive logic as the tool to conquer nature, his deeper religious and metaphysical concerns remained unaltered and he continued to identify 'the inconceivable' with the *dao* in Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. He finds no ready explanation to Yan's profound need to view the evolutionary process under the aspect of eternity, but compares his preoccupation with Daoism and Buddhism with contemporaries like Liang Qichao and

the Westernization camp), then to a linear issue (represented by wholesale Westernizers' belief in the dualistic incompatibility of backward China and the modern West), and then further reduced to a point issue (like the Boxers' ultra-nationalism).<sup>169</sup> Schwartz has led many subsequent critics to agree that Yan Fu's primary goal of translation was to find from Western nations the formula of 'wealth, power, and Prometheanism' to be transplanted in China, which was inevitably utilitarian and caused his distortion of basic Western ideas such as science, liberty and democracy.<sup>170</sup> If true, then Yan's treatment of the question of cultural inheritance would have been two-dimensional as well. Yet as shown above, Yan attacked the Westernizers' substance-application conception, blamed the reform camp and the May Fourth students for their indiscriminate Westernization and refutation of the entire Chinese tradition, censured the Communists for being extremist and autocratic, and cited Hugo to warn his compatriots off the danger of linear thinking in a revolutionary age. It is clear that Yan had sought to treat the issue of cultural transmission from a much higher level.

Yan's critiques and commentary translations represented an attempt to offer a rationale and methods for hybridization of the most competitive local and foreign constructions necessary for China's struggle in the modern world. They underlined a long-term agenda toward evolutionary progress, an attempt to reform traditional

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Tan Sitong. Ibid, pp. 194-96, 209-11.

<sup>169</sup> Du Weiming 杜維明, *Xiandai Jingshen Yu Rujia Chuantong* 現代精神與儒家傳統 [Modernity and the Confucian Tradition] (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1997), pp. 307-08.

<sup>170</sup> Schwartz argues that the gross misunderstanding of the noblest features of the Western political tradition and the failure of transcultural communication was not grounded in plain ignorance, but was more a difference of perspective, a different problem context that caused Yan to discern new logical connections in Western thought. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, especially pp. 237-47.



epistemology and methodology in order to modernize Confucian ontology, based on his conception of the Western way to liberal thinking, inductive reasoning and independent scientific research. He read into the Western system a new epistemological perspective to the modern world as well as scientific and systematic methodologies that could be introduced to consolidate viable traditional doctrines. He tried to move within his historical horizon to reflect upon the issue on an ontological level, and inevitably embraced Confucian cosmology. Still drawn to the moral and transcendental concerns of Confucianism as a faith but simultaneously believing in a constantly changing *dao* following the endless evolutionary process, his 'change of methods' not only involved instrumental, institutional or constitutional methods, but also methods for rejuvenation of primordial Confucian values – in a larger sense, reformation of the Confucian faith. As he told Liang Qichao in 1897, conceivably sharing a discernment close to Heraclitus, the traditional faith could not and needed not be preserved, since a reformed faith would not be the same faith.<sup>171</sup>

The faith that motivated Yan's intellectual journey to the West for 'authentic' illumination of latent or stifled indigenous tenets and his subsequent syncretism of local and foreign tenets on the basis of Confucian ontology can be compared to the faith that guided Buddhist master Xuanzang through his journey to the Indian West for 'authentic' elucidation of conflicting indigenous tenets and his discretionary reconciliation of such tenets based on the exegetical tradition of his own sect. Yan's mediation between China and the West was still predicated on the Confucian ideal of cosmological transcendence, paralleled on earth by ethical and orderly governance to be achieved through moral cultivation, a goal shared by generations of Confucian

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<sup>171</sup> Liang Qichao, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu'.

scholars, and a new mission for translators since Christian translators Xu Guangqi and Li Zhizao. It appears that the historical horizons of these great Chinese translators fuse into one great horizon, which, as Gadamer believes, operates from within and embraces our historical consciousness.<sup>172</sup>

It is on this one great horizon that generations of Confucian scholars have operated in their pursuit of the highest excellence, the presumed ‘correspondence between microcosmic human and macrocosmic nature’, the way to the noumenal, or simply, *dao*. It is not easy to prove Yan Fu’s achievement in this regard, especially when his syncretic thinking was largely published in the form of translation, rather than ‘original’ exposition which would make it easier to draw a following in the indigenous academic or intellectual arenas.<sup>173</sup> Over the past few years, there has been increasing recognition of Yan Fu’s contribution to Neo-Confucianism as a consistent seeker of the *dao*. Wu Zhanliang suggests that Yan’s critiques and translations represented an early endeavour in modern China to reform the way to the *dao*, to reinvent (rather than abandon) the Chinese tradition to adapt to the modern world by grafting useful elements from the West.<sup>174</sup> This view is fully echoed in a new

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<sup>172</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 304.

<sup>173</sup> In his discussion of the introduction of Western thinking in late Qing with Yan Fu being the first overseas student to create an intellectual impact in China, Liang Qichao suggested that ‘new learning’ failed to revive Chinese learning in late Qing mainly because most scholars saw learning as a means to utilitarian ends rather than being a pure end in itself. Another unfortunate reason was that not all overseas students participated in the introduction of Western knowledge, so that the cause had to be taken up by those who did not know European languages. Liang Qichao, *Qing Dai Xueshu Gailun*, p. 98. Liang also mentioned that half of Yan’s source texts were older texts not quite relevant to immediate concerns, probably inferring that Yan was one of those rare scholars who treated learning as an end in itself.

<sup>174</sup> Wu Zhanliang 吳展良, ‘The Search of Tao in Yen Fu’s early Years: The Continuity and



anthology on Yan Fu's thinking, in which two of the editors' prefaces are worth examining.<sup>175</sup> Lin Qiyuan calls for reassessment of Yan's thinking, which he sees as embodying a viable path to modernity for China at a time of great calamity but the practice of which was forestalled by radical movements in the past century.<sup>176</sup> Liu Guisheng holds that Yan was among a few Confucian reformers who asked for a return to 'true' Confucian thinking as it was before the Han Dynasty; he further suggests that research into Yan's thinking does not only concern the beautiful mind of the intellectual, but 'might hint at the broader issue of inheritance of traditional Chinese culture in the contemporary world'.<sup>177</sup> It remains clear that Yan's attempted treatment of this issue was three-dimensional, which ironically made him *avant la lettre* and gravely misunderstood even by his radical contemporaries.

Xiao Gongqin opines that Yan Fu's thinking represented a kind of 'new-conservatism', which concerned the reaffirmation of national character, traditional values and political thinking, and even the ideal of 'virtuous autocracy', in its gradual process of modernization.<sup>178</sup> Influenced by Spencer's view about the organic composition of society, Yan saw the reform of traditional values conducive to the immanent growth of new cells, which acted as an immanent intermediary on which extraneous factors were grafted and modulated for subsequent integration, thus

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Transformation of Traditional Modes of Learning and Thinking' = 嚴復早期的求道之旅—兼論傳統學術性格與思維方式的繼承與轉化, *Historical Enquiry* = 臺大歷史學報, 23 (1999), 239-78.

<sup>175</sup> Liu Guisheng, Lin Qiyuan and Wang Xianming (eds.), *Yan Fu Sixiang Xinlun*.

<sup>176</sup> See preface by Lin Qiyuan, in *ibid*, pp. 17-23.

<sup>177</sup> See preface by Liu Guisheng, in *ibid*, pp. 5-15.

<sup>178</sup> Xiao Gongqin 蕭功秦, 'Yan Fu Yu Jindai Xin Baoshouzhuyi Biange Sichao' 嚴復與近代新保守主義變革思潮 [Yan Fu and the Contemporary Neo-Conservatist Reform Ideology], *A Monthly Journal of SINICA Research* = 中國研究月刊, 2:3 (1996), 38-44.

constituting a constantly rejuvenating process that struck a balance between extremist conservatism or radicalism, guiding China on the steady path of transformation from a traditional society based on natural (agrarian-subsistence) economy to a modern civilization based on market economy.<sup>179</sup> According to Xiao, this represents a constant effort to live by the *dao* and modernize its means, an agenda that was ahead of his time, which made him 'tragically alone and misunderstood'.<sup>180</sup>

Max Huang and Lin Qiyang come to a similar conclusion, noting that Yan's vision and perseverance in resuscitating vital elements of indigenous thinking through hybridization were not only misunderstood by his extremist contemporaries but also misrepresented due to political and ideological biases in China especially before the 1980s.<sup>181</sup> Wang Zhongjiang thinks the same; he further suggests that Yan's proposed eclecticism of regenerated traditional values and applicable modern liberal and capitalist ideas is in line with the thinking of contemporary Neo-Confucians.<sup>182</sup>

Elizabeth Sinn queries whether, from hindsight, May Fourth students did a disservice to Yan Fu's thoughtful agenda.<sup>183</sup> In fact, Max Huang and Lin Qiyang suggest that the

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid, pp. 42-43.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, pp. 43-44.

<sup>181</sup> Huang Kewu, 'An Aspect of Yen Fu's Thought in His Late Years: His Linkage of Taoism with Liberalism' = 嚴復晚年思想的一個側面：道家思想與自由主義之會通, *Thought and Words* = 思與言, 34:3 (1996), 19-44; Lin Qiyang, 'Youguan Yan Fu Sixiang De Liangge Wenti: Jijin Yu Baoshou, Pipan Chuantong Yu Fanben Fugu' 有關嚴復思想的兩個問題：激進與保守、批判傳統與反本復古 [Two Issues on Yan Fu's Thinking: Radicalism vs. Conservatism; Critique of Tradition vs. Retrogressive Restoration], in *Yan Fu Sixiang Xinlun*, ed. by Liu Guisheng, Lin Qiyang and Wang Xianming, pp. 46-59.

<sup>182</sup> Wang Zhongjiang 王中江, *Yan Fu* 嚴復 [Yan Fu] (Hong Kong: Haixiao Chubun 海嘯出版, 1997), p. 280.

<sup>183</sup> Elizabeth Sin, 'Yan Fu', in *An Encyclopaedia of Translation. Chinese-English. English-Chinese*, ed. by Chan Sin-wai and David E. Pollard (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), pp. 429-532 (p.



seismic socio-political and ideological trends that had hampered development in China for the greater part of the past century might have been prevented if Yan's long-term plan had been better appreciated and carried on by his compatriots.<sup>184</sup> It is indeed ironical that the new generations after Yan Fu, when clamouring unconditionally for Western science, democracy, new systems and a new culture, should find themselves introducing unsystematic experimental reforms, tyrannizing productive agents of the old economy and, moreover, sterilizing the cultural and intellectual seedbed of their own civilization, which their far-sighted senior statesman had striven to till.

More balanced in-depth study about Yan Fu should shed light on the issue of transmission and renovation of the Chinese tradition. Besides breaking political and ideological biases, it is also necessary to apply the above new findings in intellectual history in translation studies and reread the theory and practice of Yan Fu's translation. The mist over Yan would probably have dispersed had he pronounced his views in 'original' writings rather than 'secondary' commentary translations. We cannot fully appreciate the subtext of a translator until we free ourselves from this limited view, as Douglas Robinson regrets, that 'translation came to be theorized as a purely technical and linguistic matter, concerned solely with the transfer of meanings from one language into another' and 'not at all associated with political issues of

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<sup>184</sup> Huang Kewu, 'The Extension of Inventing and Imagining: A Reconsideration of Yen Fu and the West' = 發明與想像的延伸：嚴復與西方的再思索, *Thought and Words* = 思與言, 36:1 (1998), 71-97; Lin Qiyan, preface to *Yan Fu Sixiang Xinlun*, ed. by Liu Guisheng, Lin Qiyan and Wang Xianming, p. 23.

domination and submission, assimilation and resistance'.<sup>185</sup>

On top of that, in the case of Yan Fu, translation was a philosophical matter, concerned not only with national salvation, power conversion and subversion, but also learning for the sake of one's self, for reformation of the Confucian faith in a turbulent context, and for rejuvenation of the *dao* in its perpetual evolution. This magnitude prompts this interdisciplinary study of Yan Fu's translation project in context and accordingly, the examination of the multiple facets of translation through different metaphors, a major one being translation as reformation.

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<sup>185</sup> Douglas Robinson: *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), p. 50.



### Chapter 3

#### Translation as Intellectual Critique: *Tianyanlun* and the Mediation between Conceptual Grids

It is my contention that people who translate texts do not, first and foremost, think on the linguistic level...Rather, they think first in terms of what I would like to call two grids...One is what I would like to call a 'conceptual grid', the other a 'textual grid'. Both grids are the result of the socialization process...Here, much more than on the linguistic level, lies an argument in favour of the creativity of translators: like writers of originals, they too have to find ways of manipulating the grids in such a way that communication becomes not only possible, but interesting and attractive...the grids, in their interplay, may well determine how reality is constructed for the reader, not just of the translation, but also of the original.<sup>1</sup>

The contextualization of the Chinese translation tradition so far shows that translation involves an interplay of power relations between the source and target systems, which precludes *a priori* definition of translation as the innocent transfer of textual materials from one language to another or *a priori* definition of translation standard as the unquestioned faithful reproduction of the original. It also situates Yan Fu as a Confucian faithful who, in a tumultuous age, sought to reform the way to the *dao* to suit an everchanging world and who, endowed with a new perspective on the world, mediated between China and the West and established his critique through translation. His faith required him to exercise linguistic and intellectual creativity in manipulating a textual grid and a laborious conceptual grid, given the gargantuan gap between the Chinese and Western way of thought.

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<sup>1</sup> André Lefevere, 'Composing the other', in *Post-Colonial Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 75-94 (p. 75-77). Hans J. Vermeer also argues that 'translating is not merely and not even primarily a linguistic process'. Hans J. Vermeer, 'What does it mean to translate?', *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 13: 2 (1987), 25-33 (29).

Benjamin I. Schwartz hailed *Tianyanlun*, Yan's translation of *Evolution and Ethics*, as 'the first serious attempt after the Jesuits to present contemporary Western thought to the literati'.<sup>2</sup> The Jesuits were serious despite their 'enculturation' approach toward a hybrid genre and a 'hybrid Jesuit/Chinese community', doing this in the name of conversion, out of their faith in God.<sup>3</sup> Some of their Chinese partners enculturated their 'sacred' source to supplement the Confucian order, to pursue mediation and transcendence through translation as a moral and scholarly pursuit. Yan Fu performed a more impressive task than his Chinese predecessors when, engaging in his own metaphysical exercise and a broader enlightening operation, he presented complicated Western constructs to his readers in an exciting and stimulating way, following a well thought plan, writing in canonical style and in so doing, constructed an expansive hybridized discourse that engaged generations of readers in their rationalization of 'the West' vis-à-vis China.

Discourse here is in many ways similar to Michel Foucault's notion of discourse as adopted by Edward Said to examine Orientalism.<sup>4</sup> Here, Foucaultian discourse means the historicized definition of an object by way of a set of concepts which can be used to analyze the object, to delimit what can and cannot be said about it, and to demarcate who can say it; the truth of which is akin to a rhetorical imposition for there are 'no

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<sup>2</sup> Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization* (Dublin and London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 40-42, 79.

<sup>4</sup> Said referred to the notion of discourse as described by Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*. Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1995; first publ. 1978), p. 3.



criteria of truth external to it'.<sup>5</sup> When André Lefevere's translator tries to translate, s/he engages in a discourse that tries to define the Other by way of a textual grid and, more importantly, a conceptual grid, exercising power on the analyzed object. A discourse is always a shifting, temporary construction, so that the translator's way of handling the two grids is never fixed, precluding any claim to absolute translation methods. The translator tends to interpolate an object along the existing grids of the stronger system when facing a temporary stable discourse, but when there is a shift in power relations between the stronger and weaker systems, the translator may well need to break existing grids to channel a new discourse.

European powers began in the late eighteenth century to engage in systematic and multi-disciplinary rewriting and codification of the Orient, thereby imposing a Eurocentric 'Oriental' discourse that appropriates 'the power to represent the Oriental, to translate and explain his (and her) thoughts and acts not only to Europeans and Americans but also to the Orientals themselves.'<sup>6</sup> When Sir William Jones (1749-1794), British jurist and Orientalist who presided over the bench of the Supreme Court in Calcutta in 1783, appealed 'to domesticate' the weaker Orient and 'thereby turn it into a province of European learning', he was in fact violating the conventional textual and conceptual grids of the Indians to make a new discourse, a discourse for the stronger Europe.<sup>7</sup> Tejaswini Niranjana has shown how the postcolonial translator can resist that interpellative discourse by engaging in literal disruption and dissemination of 'the

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<sup>5</sup> See 'discourse' in Roger Fowler (ed.), *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999; first publ. 1973), p. 64-66.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Inden, 'Orientalist Constructions of India,' *Modern Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (1986): 401-46; quoted in Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 11.

original' for a richer and deeper understanding of the 'self'.<sup>8</sup> When she opts for Benjaminian literalness to allow the source text to 'affect' 'the language into which it is being translated, 'interrupting' the 'transparency' and 'smoothness' of the preceding 'totalizing narrative', she is in fact disrupting the former 'homogenizing' textual and conceptual grids in order to resist the stronger European discourse.<sup>9</sup>

Gideon Toury holds that 'translations always come into being within a certain cultural environment and are designed to meet certain needs of, and/or occupy certain "slots" in it'.<sup>10</sup> As argued in the last chapter, the need for Yan Fu was multi-dimensional: practical, intellectual, philosophical and cosmological.<sup>11</sup> Li Zehou remarks that Yan Fu's systematic transfer of Western bourgeoisie thinking, namely, evolution, positivism, logic, classical economics and political science, especially through the translation of Huxley, Smith, Montesquieu and Mill, represents a conscious endeavour to provide the necessary theoretical tenets for China to understand the underlying social, political and philosophical structures of the West and to gauge its own predicament and stature in the international arena, a timely move to fulfil his contemporaries' urgent need for truth and Western knowledge.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that Yan's translations were not

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<sup>7</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> Niranjana, *Siting Translation*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 185.

<sup>10</sup> Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Hao Chang claims that the need for Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century to translate Western thought stemmed not so much from intellectual curiosity than problems of life and society. Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning (1890-1911)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p 12. But as argued in this thesis, the earthly concerns of many late Qing intellectuals were often driven by a deeper Confucian intellectual and cosmological ideal.

<sup>12</sup> Li Zehou 李澤厚, 'Lun Yan Fu' 論嚴復 [On Yan Fu], first publ. 1977, in *Zhongguo Sixiangshi Lun* 中



intended primarily for letting the authors or the source texts speak, but for presenting them as representation of the powerful Other and as a point of departure for his critique of and research into the Other and the self, rationalizing their history, merits, biases and deficiencies in search of a pertinent *dao* under a new international order. His readers might not have understood his higher goals. Yet they conceivably interpreted his representation as an anti-interpellative discourse and utilized his translations as a tool for learning, a tool for turning Western knowledge into a province of, and for some, a substitute for Chinese learning.

Yan's translations did not seek for imitation but political and ideological intervention. His translations, as well as the source texts, were presented and perceived as an access to knowledge and truth rather than the intellectual property of a foreign author to be fully preserved or represented. They could be perceived as his intellectual critique which provided a hybridized conceptual grid that exercised considerable influence on his younger contemporaries and on the generation of intelligentsia and political elite born in the 1900s, including men as diverse as vernacular writer Lu Xun, scholar Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), educationist Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1863-1940) and Communist leader Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976).<sup>13</sup> When Cai Yuanpei reckoned Yan Fu to be the leading figure in the introduction of Western philosophy into China, he simultaneously commended his serious attitude, purposeful choice of source texts and his addition of commentary.<sup>14</sup> Cai should find himself unconsciously celebrating the

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國思想史論 [On the History of Chinese Thought], 3 vols. (Anhui: Wenyi Chubanshe 文藝出版社, 1999), II, pp. 580-615.

<sup>13</sup> Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, 'Wushinian Lai Zhongguo Zhi Zhexue' 五十年來中國之哲學 [Chinese Philosophy over the Last Fifty Years], in *Cai Yuanpei Quanjì* 蔡元培全集 [Complete Works of Cai

hybridized conceptual grid that Yan constructed; so should Mao Zedong, when he esteemed Yan to be ‘one of the four leading figures to seek truth from the West before the birth of the Chinese Communist Party’.<sup>15</sup> If placing a ‘mere tongue-person’ on par with three other politically weighty ‘revolutionaries’ is not intriguing enough, it is baffling that Chairman Mao should give his blessing to a ‘bourgeois conservative’ who was at loggerheads with radical political reform, the 1911 Revolution, the May Fourth Movement and egalitarian Socialism.

It is interesting to note that Mao and his pre-Communist heroes all constructed a hybridized conceptual grid for themselves and their contemporaries to gauge foreign propositions, the latter being predicated on foreign situations out of foreign concerns, and in so doing, generated their own propositions and assertions that cohered to form a discourse of their own. Hong Xiuquan’s conception of the Heavenly Kingdom’s reign on earth with himself as the second son of Jehovah after a ‘vision’ he claimed to have experienced subsequent to his third failed attempt at the civil service examinations, probably inspired by Christian texts that he had read, together with his cousin’s policy proposal based on Western models reflect prodigious acculturation of imported

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Yuanpei], 7 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1964), IV, pp. 351-54 (p. 353). Cai was a proponent of the anti-Manchu Revolution and head of the Peking University from 1916 to 1926 during the critical period when the institution played a major role in the development of a new spirit of nationalism and literary and social reform in China.

<sup>15</sup> Mao Zedong 毛澤東, *Lun Renmin Minzhu Zhuanzheng* 論人民民主專政 [On Peoples’ Democratic Dictatorship] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1975; first publ. 1949), p.3. The other three persons are Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814-64), leader of the Taiping Rebellion and self-declared king of the ‘Taiping Heavenly Kingdom’ in Nanjing, which threatened the rule of the Qing Dynasty from 1851-65; Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), mastermind of the Hundred Days Reform in 1898 and Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866-1925), influential revolutionary leader who was often known as the father of modern China. All of them attracted a large following and ignited a new stream of thinking at a time



thought.<sup>16</sup> Kang Youwei's constitutional reform rationale, based on modified Western models and his expansion on the New Text School's vision of the tripartite evolutionary path to orderly governance tapping on Yan's evolutionary discourse, conceivably involves massive manipulation of foreign ideas. Sun Yat-sen's 'new' evolutionary theory, which interpreted the Chinese inferiority in knowledge and inaptitude to action as the greatest hindrance to evolutionary progress, exemplifies the transplantation of foreign thought on Chinese soil. Maoism itself represents the grafting of Marxist theory and practice, which had been designed for the urban proletariat, on the peasantry in China, where mechanization, mercantilism and capitalism had never fully developed.

Obviously Mao did not intend to take 'truth' to mean 'truthful' or 'faithful' translation of a source since paradoxically all four figures, as well as Mao himself, were more concerned about how to utilize Western ideas for some higher truth, as they saw it, than how to represent the West. It is hardly surprising that the pragmatist who defines truth in terms of the satisfactoriness of belief will be happy to accept a proposition that succeeds to fulfill expectations as truth. Nor is it hard to understand that the commoner who sees truth as a correspondence between a proposition and the situation that verifies it will readily ascribe truthfulness to a proposition when the circumstances to assert it as correct comes. All awareness of facts is itself propositional, involving the assertion of some proposition, the assertion itself governed by personal, contextual, societal and institutional factors such as belief, interest, anxiety, aspiration, repression, culture, education and so on. Thus truth is a relation of coherence between asserted propositions,

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when the society was upset by a weak government and foreign aggression.

<sup>16</sup> For a brief account on the rise and fall of Hong, see Philip A. Kuhn, 'The Taiping Rebellion', in *The Cambridge History of China*, X, ed. by John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

precluding any claim to 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth' as represented in the court room, for even the most trustworthy witness is merely presenting propositions predicated on the questions posed during the examination, to be subject to assertion by the jury or judge, and the most truthful representation is but one convincing fixation of truth; there is no absolute truth in itself.

A seeker of truth, in the continuous process of deciphering the (in)coherence between asserted propositions, may inevitably come to the conclusion that there is no ultimate or original truth, but may nevertheless reach a transitory fixation of a seeming truth whenever s/he comes to assert a new proposition. Different people make different propositions and people with a similar background tend to claim similar assertions, which will in turn have a bearing on the formulation of new propositions. As a community gradually accumulates a sufficiently large body of coherent assertions that serve as a productive agent of derivative or innovative propositions, a collective conceptual grid is formed with which new or alien propositions will be charted against existing assertions. Propositions that prove coherent will be plotted and associated assertions connected to fix one representation of truth, while incoherent propositions are usually expelled, marginalized or modified to conform to the configuration of the grid. The conceptual grid of a community represents a configuration of possible representations of truth that serves as its reference frame for perception of the world, that is, a worldview. Different communities formulate different conceptual grids and when communication takes place, one community will naturally try to plot the other's representations against their own coordinates. During the process of mutual mapping, the attraction and resistance between compatible and repellent representations



respectively will cause intersection at certain points, and strong and massive grids will have a tendency to absorb smaller ones. If the coordinates are very different, however, plotting will not be possible on the same plane and the two communities can choose either not to interact or to modify their coordinates in an attempt to pull the two grids closer to each other so that intersections can be made.

In traditional China, the force of mainstream Confucian-based coordinates used to be hegemonic, easily repelling or amalgamating extraneous representations or even whole extraneous grids, but that was no longer possible in late Qing when the Other sought to subjugate but not communicate. As his contemporaries tried to make sense of Western representations, some trying to de-Westernize and some totally borrow a foreign grid, Yan Fu was probably the first to succeed in manufacturing new complementary coordinates exerting attractive forces so great that triggered off mutation of the Confucian grid. His new coordinates, constructed upon his critique of both Chinese and Western representations of existential truth, immediately rendered many Chinese assertions inadequate or even irrelevant. The former assertion of an unchanging *dao* to be justification for unchallenged authority of the emperor, for instance, became subject to a new world order governed by modern institutions and values, such as evolutionary progress, enlightened assertion, and personal right and liberty confined by the interest of the larger society, some of which he considered as reminiscent of primordial Confucian representations. Through his critique, he attempted to transcend transitory fixations of truth, screening out incoherent assertions, enculturating useful but foreign ones and rejuvenating obsolete but useful ones. This process embodies his vision and existential biases in his capacity as a seeker of truth, a seeker of valid paths to the *dao*. Furthermore, it envelops a constant effort to modernize the *dao* and hints to future

generations the broader issue of inheritance of traditional Chinese culture in the contemporary world.

Ironically, while Yan Fu is considered a seeker of truth, he is condemned as an untruthful translator. Postulating a new world view through intellectual critique, contained mainly in his translations, his hybridized discourse has been gauged by entirely different standards in the field of intellectual history and the field of translated literature. He occupies a paradigmatic role in Chinese intellectual history because he constructed a hybridized conceptual grid for late Qing intellectuals to formulate a new world view and because, consciously or otherwise, later generations went on rationalizing their own tradition expanding on this world view, though his deeper aspirations have been underestimated due to the ensuing radical political climate and his primary role as a translator rather than a writer or politician.<sup>17</sup> He is celebrated as the most significant translator in late Qing because of the scope and difficulty of his endeavour, but his hybridized discourse is often criticized as unfaithful representation of the source text, a deficiency thought to be a result of his bias and subjectivity toward elitist poetics. When it comes to translation, Yan Fu the creative socializer is often reduced to a typically preconceived image of a translator as imitator of the source.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The general dictionary sense of 'paradigm' is used here: the philosophical and theoretical framework of a discipline within which theories, laws, generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated. While a paradigm shift tends to effect a different world view and research strategies, multiple paradigms can coexist in the realm of arts and social sciences, where a paradigm shift tend to cause a previous paradigm to appear less adequate or relevant. Paradigms need not be mutually exclusive or falsify each other, unlike what Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) holds for the development of scientific revolutions. See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996; first publ. 1962).

<sup>18</sup> A typical example occurs when Hu Shi pinpoints Yan Fu the distinguished intellectual and Yan Fu the translator as separate issues. Hu Shi, renowned scholar, ambassador to the United States in 1938-1942



Worse still, the products of his creative socialization are often assessed by the criterion of literalness – which is irrelevant to faithfulness at all – a view that limits the study of the potentialities of translation as a tool to variable ends and the development of translation studies as a discipline.<sup>19</sup>

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and President of Peking University in 1945-1949, comments that Yan expanded the repertoire of translated literature that had been limited to history, religion, science and technology and expanded the world view of his readers who had taken for granted that Western arts and humanities were non-comparable to Chinese civilization. But he says that ‘this belongs to the realm of intellectual history and we need not talk about it’ and continues to evaluate his translation principles and use of classical Chinese. Hu Shi, ‘Wushinian Lai Zhongguo Zhi Wenxue’ 五十年來中國之文學 [Chinese Literature over the Past Fifty Years], in *Hu Shi Wencun* 胡適文存 [Essays by Hu Shi], 4 vols. (Taipei: Yuandong Tushu Gongsì 遠東圖書公司, 1979; first publ. 1922), II, pp. 180-260 (pp. 194-96).

<sup>19</sup> Schwartz, for instance, regards *Tiyananlun* as a ‘paraphrastic translation’, ‘not so much a translation as an abridged summation of the original’ that facilitates ‘occasional serious distortions of meaning’. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*:, pp. 95-96. Wu Guangjian 伍光建 (1866-1943), student of the Tianjin North Sea Fleet Academy and Greenwich Royal Navy Academy, and translator into vernacular Chinese, thinks that Yan Fu’s rewriting is not worth emulating. See Wu Lifu 伍蠡甫, ‘Wu Guangjian De Fanyi Guandian’ 伍光建的翻譯觀點 [Wu Guangjian’s Views on Translation], in *Essays on Translation* = 翻譯論集, ed. by Liu Jingzhi 劉靖之 (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1981), pp. 358-363 (p. 361). Some comments on the accuracy of Yan Fu’s translations are cited by He Lin 賀麟 ‘Yan Fu De Fanyi’ 嚴復的翻譯 [Yan Fu’s Translation], 1925, in *Lun Yan Fu Yu Yanyi Mingzhu* 論嚴復與嚴譯名著 [On Yan Fu and His Famous Translations], ed. by Shangwu Yinshuguan Section 商務印書館編輯部 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), pp. 28-42. Fu Sinian 傅斯年, for instance, says that Yan Fu’s translations of *Evolution and Ethics* and *The Spirit of Laws* are the worst because he chose to be responsible to himself rather than the original author. Zhang Junli 張君勱 comments that Yan’s translations, written in beautiful literary language with abundant Chinese allusions, deviate from the original meaning and are imprecise by scientific standard. He Lin divides Yan Fu’s translations into three phases according to their degree of literalness. He considers Yan’s earlier translations of *Evolution and Ethics*, *The Spirit of Laws* and *A System of Logic* immature and ‘a bit inadequate in terms of faithfulness since they are not intended to be literal’. The translations of his second phase, those of *The Study of Sociology*, *On Liberty*, *A History of Politics* and *The Wealth of Nations*, which he considers ‘almost a literal translation’, are ‘the best’, being ‘faithful, expressive and elegant’, ‘slightly closer to literal translation and should draw few criticism’. As for the works produced in the third phase – *Primer of Logic*, which is especially free, and the adaptation of Westharp, which is written in journalistic style and almost a libertine translation – they are not important at all and ‘we do not need to study them in

We have seen how translation can serve as a tool for power conversion and reformation. For Yan Fu, translation can also serve as intellectual critique. It would be invariably easy to delineate ‘the’ task of a translator or ‘the’ standard of translation based on a simplistic notion of faithfulness, though it would be difficult to do the same for an intellectual or an intellectual work. It should be interesting to imagine what could have happened if Yan Fu had channelled his hybridized discourse through the more ‘assertive’ or ‘relevant’ form of intellectual critique. Although there are claims that critique is ‘derivative’ from ‘original’ propositions, it is highly unlikely for a critique to be subject to the same *a priori* standard of the more ‘secondary’ translation. Presumably his assertions would have been better tolerated and vision more seriously appreciated. It would be beneficial to examine, with concrete examples, how translation served for Yan Fu as intellectual critique, how he engaged in an interesting and attractive socialization process manufacturing new coordinates and manipulating conceptual grids to construct a new reality for the reader, and how these illuminate the role and nature of translation. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to conduct textual analysis of all of Yan Fu’s translations and I will focus on his most influential translation, *Tianyanlun* 天演論.

In *Tianyanlun*, as in most of his translations, Yan espouses his own thoughts and arguments around certain points and adds his own commentaries embedded in the main text introduced by the cue ‘*Fu an*’ 復案 [Fu comments].<sup>20</sup> His commentaries in

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detail’, though apparently he has not studied Yan’s translations in detail or offered concrete substantiation on any of his claims either.

<sup>20</sup> The Shangwu Yinshuguan (Shangwu Yinshuguan) made this point clear in their Publisher’s Note in



*Tianyanlun* are so frequent and lengthy that Schwartz calls it ‘translation-commentary’.<sup>21</sup> In most cases, Yan follows the sequence of arguments of the source text, but the chapter divisions may vary as he often combines, deletes or adds certain parts or whole chapters. Examples of his rewriting abound, but I will only pinpoint those that demonstrate how the pioneer translator refurbishes the indigenous textual and conceptual grids to make his point. To this purpose, I will back-translate *Tianyanlun* (hereinafter referred to as ‘TYL’) into English as literally as possible in order to exemplify how the translator’s values and preoccupations differ from those in *Evolutions and Ethics* (hereinafter referred to as ‘EE’).<sup>22</sup> For specific terms, word-for-word back translation may be provided to reflect the translator’s conceptual frame, given the indeterminacy of representation and interpretation of the paratactic Chinese language, whose grammar is covert, often without morphological markers of tense, mood, aspect or grammatical category in the surface structure.<sup>23</sup>

For clearer illustration, I will provide detailed pagination of TYL in parenthesis, such as

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the 1981 reprint series of Yan Fu’s eight major translations.

<sup>21</sup> Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 82.

<sup>22</sup> The following edition of Huxley is used throughout this dissertation: *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1911). As for *Tianyanlun*, so far as detailed textual analysis is concerned in this chapter, the following edition is used because of its detailed annotation and translation of Yan’s classical prose into vernacular Chinese: Yan Fu (trans.), *Tianyanlun* [On Evolution] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1998; first woodblock print 1898). The annotator provides no clue as to which earlier edition(s) he used, but textual comparison shows it is similar to the version by Fuwen Press 富文書局 in 1901, which formed the basis of later versions by the Shangwu Yinshuguan.

<sup>23</sup> For an introduction to the Chinese language, see, for example, John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language. Fact and Fantasy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990); Jerry Norman, *Chinese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995).

the relevant part number (I and II, which correspond to Huxley's prolegomena and main text respectively) and chapter: page number (from 1: 1 on). In TYL, Yan Fu restructured the prolegomena and main text of EE into an eighteen-chapter Part I *daoyan* 導言 [introductory remarks] and a seventeen-chapter Part II *lun* 論 [discussion] respectively. All chapters but one bear a succinct two-character heading, the one exception being a three-character heading *wutuobang* 烏托邦, the transliteration of 'utopia'. The use of clean succinct headings is characteristic of the textual grid of Chinese, which in this case came from the advice of Yan's mentor Wu Rulun.<sup>24</sup> The flow of *Tianyanlun* roughly follows the order of *Evolution and Ethics*, with a lot of addition, deletion and rewriting.

I shall first examine how the title itself reveals the extent and nature of rewriting. In the three-character title, the last character *lun* 論, meaning discussion, remains the least equivocal. The first character *tian* 天 [lit. sky or heaven] connotes manifold meanings under different contexts in the Chinese tradition – a material or physical sky, an anthropomorphic presiding power, a fatalistic power, a naturalistic universe, an ethereal existence, a mechanistic order, or an ethical cosmic order.<sup>25</sup> The all-embracing

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<sup>24</sup> In his first drafts, Yan used the term *zhiyan* 卮言 [rambling remarks] and *xuanshu* 懸疏 [profound commentaries] instead of *daoyan* and did not title his chapters. Wu Rulun suggested in a letter that he coined a new term since *zhiyan* was cliché (it originated from Daoist classic *Zhuangzi*) and *xuanshu* a Buddhist jargon; he also attached a list of chapter titles for Yan's reference. See Wu Rulun, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu' 致嚴復書 [Letter to Yan Fu], 20 March 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji* 嚴復集 [Works of Yan Fu], ed. by Wang Shi 王栻, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986), V, pp. 1561-62. Yan Fu also adopted two-character chapter headings in his translation of *The Study of Sociology*. It should be noted that many Chinese classical texts adopt two-character headings, like the *Analects* of Confucius, the Daoist canon *Zhuangzi* and the first major treatise on literary criticism, *Wenxin Diaolong* 文心雕龍.

<sup>25</sup> In his translation of *A Study of Sociology*, Yan Fu also notes, in a commentary in Chapter XVI



first principle of *tian*, the *dao* (the Way), was conventionally held to be conceivable and accessible to human by way of its externalization in the *dao* of the human world to be mediated through human morality, conduct or truth.<sup>26</sup> With the institutionalization of Confucian as the state ideology in the Han Dynasty, the dominion of the emperor was

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affirming the application of the evolutionary theory on sociology, that the word *tian* is ambiguous and problematic in Chinese, conveying different meanings such as Lord or God, sky or heaven, nature or causation, chance or destiny, which are signified by distinctive words in European languages. See commentary in Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunxue Siyan* 群學肆言 [On the Study of the Group] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1903), p. 410.

<sup>26</sup> Most Confucians believe in positive interaction between human and heaven. To Confucius, heaven is often a purposeful and omnipotent Supreme being, and he preached the way to human life rather than the way of heaven. To Mencius, heaven is fatalistic, ethical and the source of man's nature; so he said, 'For a man to give full realization to his heart is for him to understand his own nature, and a man who knows his own nature will know heaven. By retaining his heart and nurturing his nature he is serving Heaven.' See D.C. Lau (trans.), *Mencius* (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 182. From this view arises the notion of ethical unity of man and the cosmos, *tianren heyi* 天人合一 [union of heaven and human into one]. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c.179-c.104 BC), chief architect of the institutionalisation of Confucianism as the state ideology in the Han Dynasty, sees heaven as an anthropomorphic entity that corresponds to the human body and conduct in various aspects, thereby asserting human's positive role on earth and telepathy with heaven, a belief called *tianren ganying* 天人感應 [echo between heaven and human]. He states:

Man receives the Decree (*ming*) of Heaven, and therefore is loftier (than other) creatures. (Other) creatures suffer troubles and distress and are unable to practice love (*jen*) and righteousness (*yi*); only man is capable of practicing them...Man has 360 joints, which matches the number of Heaven. His body, with its bones and flesh, matches the thickness of Earth. He has ears and eyes above, with their capacity for hearing and seeing, which correspond to the forms of the sun and moon... When we observe man's body, how much loftier is he (than other) creatures, and one, withal, the same in kind as Heaven! (Other) creatures derive their life from Heaven's *yin* and *yang* in a recumbent position, whereas man brilliantly bears its markings...(Man's) conduct follows the principles of proper relationship, which correspond to (the relationship between) Heaven and Earth...Heaven, indeed, is man's supreme ancestor. This is why man is to be classed with Heaven above...The duplicate of Heaven lies in man, and man's feelings and nature derive from Heaven.

Dong Zhongshu, "Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals"; quoted in Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. by Derk Bodde, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973; first publ. 1953), II, 30-32.

believed to rest in heaven.<sup>27</sup> The prescription of strict moral and ritual codes for attainment of earthly order to parallel the constant heavenly order gradually turned into intellectual straitjackets. In late Qing, this doctrine was usurped by the Manchu court for political propaganda – ‘heaven does not change, neither does the *dao*’ – to justify its reign over the Han race and to fortify its dwindling authority.

Based on his inclination to positivism, Yan Fu emphasizes the material sense of *tian* to argue that all beings, even ancient sages, and all teachings, even traditional canons, are subject to the same naturalistic principle that is bound for incessant material changes; a point he already made forcefully in his 1895 political critique ‘On Drastic World Changes’. Building on Huxley’s observation of the smallness of human beings before the almost indiscernible ‘impermanence’ of the cosmic process (EE, 2-3), Yan supplies his own supporting examples steeped in the Chinese conceptual grid in the first chapter of *Tianyanlun*, titled ‘Observing Changes’ 察變. Illustrating that the long past of a humble plant – *huangqin* 黃芩 [*Scutellaria baicalensis*], the Chinese equivalent of the English plant ‘Amarella Gentians’ – would dwarf the history of the ‘Three Primeval Ages’ and the greatness of the Changjiang (Yangtze River), the translator analogizes

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See also *ibid*, I, pp. 57-58; II, pp. 16-30.

<sup>27</sup> The correlation between human order and heavenly order and the belief in an unchanging *dao* originates from Dong Zhongshu, who assimilated the cosmological speculation of the School of Yin and Yang to interpret Confucian doctrines, *yin* and *yang* being the dualistic principles of the universe interacting to form all things. Establishing a kind of mystical telepathy between man and heaven, the gentry official held that human nature and conduct reflected the principles of heaven and that the *raison d’être* of kingship lay in heaven. See Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, I, pp. 7-87; Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, *Chunqiu Fanlu* 春秋繁露 [Luxuriant Dew of Spring and Autumn Annals], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1937); Zeng Zhenyu 曾振宇 and Fan Xuehui 范學輝, *Tianren Hengzhong* 天人衡中 [Correspondence Between Man and Heaven] (Kaifeng: Henan Daxue Chubanshe 河南大學出版社, 1998).



Huxley's 'state of nature' to *tiandao* 天道 [heavenly way] and declares that *tian* unquestionably changes all the time beyond the dictation of old conventions (TYL, I, 1: 41). He goes on to provide his own allusions taken from Chinese classics to disapprove human fallacy in taking the manifestly slow-changing state of nature to be unchanging and unchangeable (42), leaving out Huxley's 'Flora of the Sussex downs, as that of Central Africa' (EE, 3), which is irrelevant to his critique.<sup>28</sup> He then affirms that 'unchanging' is definitely not the word to describe *tianyun* 天運 [heavenly destiny] (TYL, I, 1:42), thereby reiterating his defiance against the deterministic and absolutistic interpretation of *tian* that buttresses the power of the aristocracy and gentry officials in conventional Chinese discourse.

In reconstructing 'heaven' as a new coordinate, Yan asserts the ever-changing nature of heaven to be the only unchanging principle of the cosmos, and in this way, equates heaven with Huxley's involuntary cosmic process. This represents an attempt to fix an order out of flux, which reflects the typical drive of Chinese intellectuals for an omniscient and omnipresent *dao*. Recasting *tian* as the cosmic process, the translator further explains its operation deploying the typically Chinese substance-application (*ti-yong*) conception, which is however not present in the source text: *tianyan* 天演 [heaven evolves, or evolution of heaven] (representing Huxley's cosmic process) is the essential principle; *wujing* 物競 [things compete, or competition] (representing the struggle for existence) and *tianze* 天擇 [heaven selects, or selection] (representing

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<sup>28</sup> Yan elaborates that slow cosmic changes are beyond the comprehension of long-lived men like the legendary Peng 彭 and Dan 聃 as well as short-lived plants and insects like *zhaojun* 朝菌 and *huigu* 蟪蛄. He also likens those who brand nature as unchanging to a blind man, *gu* 瞽. These examples are mostly taken from Daoist classics *Zhuangzi*, Peng from *Guoyu* 國語 [Record of Eight States of the

natural selection) are its practical applications (EE, 4; TYL, 42). This new heavenly order, marked by uncertainties, together with its pertaining application, struggle for survival, are in every aspect contrary to the traditional ideal of a steady and harmonious order, and are outside the realm of traditional ideology and terminology. James Reeve Pusey suggests that only evolutionary theory can reasonably account for the disorder in those days, so Yan and his compatriots are eager to take part in the struggle for survival.<sup>29</sup> Yan's new substance-application conception offers a more material approach to the rationalization of heavenly order, a convincing substitute to the traditional idealistic conception, and swiftly becomes a productive new assertion in Chinese discourse.

Having established 'competition for existence' as the new *dao* to a new *tian*, *tianyan* (heavenly changes) can then correlate to *shibian* 世變 [world changes] and similarly, impermanent *tianyun* 天運 [heavenly destiny] to *shiyun* 世運 [world destiny] (TYL, I, 2: 57), so that sanctified sages are recast as merely 'a thing in the cause of world destiny' (II, 2: 261). Actually Yan has already announced this belief in historical determinism in 'On Drastic World Changes'. In *Tianyanlun*, in the chapter titled 'General Thesis' 廣義, Yan utilizes these powerful coordinates to challenge not only the inviolability of the sage but also religious faith, mainly Buddhist, Christian and Islamic stories about divine creation (I, 2: 58), fortifying his argument with a long commentary on Spencer's 'complicated and profound' explanation of cosmic evolution based on the flux of physical matters and energy under the effect of gravitational force

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Spring and Autumn Period].

<sup>29</sup> James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983), pp. 75-77.



(58-60). The argument against divine creation is however only briefly discussed by Huxley in a later section, where he attributes 'faith' to 'knowledge' and rules out the possibility of irrational and religious 'hypotheses' concerning creation (EE, 8), after introducing the three natural tendencies for life forms to vary, to be subject to selection and to multiply without limit (7). It is worth mentioning that Yan selectively elaborates on these three tendencies in a long commentary in a separate chapter, titled 'Tendency to Vary' 趨異, introducing the Malthusian hypothesis on geometric population progression and its application by Huxley on biological multiplication as the necessary theoretical basis of competition and selection, for his readers' information (TYL, I, 3: 75-76). He is in fact consciously purporting Darwinian observation as law.<sup>30</sup> Another interesting fact concerns Yan's analogy between the Darwinian hypothesis that all organic beings possibly descend from a certain primordial form and the Chinese belief that many are descended from one, as embodied in *Laozi* and Neo-Confucianism.<sup>31</sup>

Yan's analogizing represents a regenerative operation much more sophisticated than the kind of 'pedagogical device' that Schwartz observes, which cannot fully account for the 'deep metaphysical cosmological level' on which he says Yan operates.<sup>32</sup> Yan is

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<sup>30</sup> Darwin's conclusion to his observation runs: 'it follows that any being, if it varies however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be *naturally selected*.' Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: Avenel Books, 1979), p. 68.

<sup>31</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, pp. 59-60. The Chinese proposition is 'one principle but different applications' 理一而分殊.

<sup>32</sup> Schwartz suggests that Yan's analogizing is a 'pedagogical device of explaining the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, and the suspiciously novel in terms of the respectably ancient', embodying a nationalist element of 'pride in national accomplishments'. He says that Yan 'may genuinely feel that he discerns, rightly or wrongly, affinities between elements of Chinese thought and elements of Western thought' and 'it is precisely at the "deep" metaphysical cosmological level that Spencer's image of the

ready to enculturate foreign propositions and adjust indigenous ones to overhaul existing reference coordinates, which engenders conceptual hybridization and reconstructs a more elastic conceptual grid that allows natural selection of native assertions and adaptation of foreign propositions. Once the prime coordinate *tian*, traditionally perceived to be constant and inviolable, is plowed for the seeding of the foreign abstraction 'cosmic process' with its pertaining principle of 'impermanence', it becomes a productive agent fertilizing the local conception of *yan* (change), which takes root in *tian* to produce the a hybrid term *tianyan* (evolutionary change) and weeds out the decaying inveterate principle of 'constancy'. Upon this hybridized grid, he proceeds to plot and enculturate other foreign propositions like social evolutionary progress, preservation of races, social organism and ethical progress, while instilling the growth of local hybrids like preservation of the Chinese race, freedom for creative development, enlightened self-assertion for the interest of the society and positive competition with nature, what he deems relevant to his existential concern and more constructive than traditional coordinates. In this way, he makes what would have been incompatible iconoclasm palatable and regenerative. This proved more effective than contemporary tendencies to either de-Westernization or categorical transplantation.

Yan makes his point on 'progress' clearly in his commentary to the first chapter titled 'Observing Changes' 察變: 'Ever since Darwin, we know that the human world is subject to the evolutionary process, progressing while evolving, and the future will surpass the present.' (TYL, I, 1: 43) Then, in the commentary to the chapter entitled 'Human Selects' 人擇, he comments that Darwin illustrates in *The Origin of Species*

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universe seems most congenial to certain inveterate Chinese modes of thought.' Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, pp. 51-52.



examples of artificial selection in horticulture and animal breeding leading to modification, progression or degradation of species (I, 6: 113), after his summarized account of Huxley's arguments on 'direct selection, in view of an ideal of utility or beauty' of varieties by the gardener to restrict multiplication of plants (EE, 13-15). This is far from what Darwin intended, for he merely observes that natural selection and artificial selection engender modification of species, and gradual modification connotes a progression of change by steps or degrees, which could be forward or backward, positive or negative, though it usually operates from a condition of relative uniformity to one of relative complexity.

Given the expansion of the high colonial age of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that many Europeans tended to take evolutionary process as evolutionary progress. For Yan Fu, it presented a painful reality to his generation. Huxley reminds his readers at the outset that although 'evolution' is popularly taken to signify progressive development, it also covers the phenomenon of retrogressive metamorphosis (EE, 6). He insists repeatedly from 1862 that 'every theory of evolution must be consistent not merely with progressive development, but with indefinite persistence in the same condition and with retrogressive modification' (4, footnote). He also mentions the possibility of atavism besides progressive evolution in an endnote on the operation of latent potentiality in living things, in what we today would call genetic heredity (87-88).

All exposition on retrogressive evolution is deleted in *Tianyanlun*. Only the part on progressive evolution remains, given Yan's tendency to believe in Spencer's progressive optimism, although he does insert elsewhere a paragraph on atavism in

animals such as the horse, the donkey and the pigeon, but just as simple illustration of the protracted process of evolutionary progress in a much later chapter titled ‘Subtle Progress’ 進微 (TYL, I, 16: 211). In fact an overall tone of progress is set from the outset. The translator replaces Huxley’s observation of ‘the turf, with its weeds and gorse’ being proven the fittest in the struggle for survival in the cosmic process (EE, 5), the world of vegetation being quite irrelevant to his primary social-moral concerns, by inserting a quotation from Spencer in the corresponding first chapter: ‘Spencer said: Natural selection means the survival of the fittest. Evolution is the product of the struggle for survival among living things and the subsequent natural selection.’ (TYL, I, 1: 42) Yan concludes the chapter by a four-paragraph commentary on the brief development of evolutionary theory and brief biographical notes on Darwin and Spencer. He sees Darwin’s contribution to biology as definitive as that of Copernicus to astronomy; *The Origin of Species* illustrates the law that ‘human, as a constituent of the cosmic process, progress gradually as they develop and future generations will advance; religious stories on divine creation are inevitably incredible’ (43). But Yan seems to have an even higher opinion of Spencer’s *System of Synthetic Philosophy*, whose holistic epistemology demonstrates the principles of ‘the preservation of the race’ (*baozhong*) 保種 [preserve, species] and ‘progressive evolution’ (*jinhua*) 進化 [progress, modify] (42-43).

On the earthly level, the principles of the preservation and progress of certain races appear to Yan as among Spencer’s most pertinent tenets and remain important goals of his translation project. Late Qing Chinese were worried that their nation might be subjugated by Western powers. Under this looming threat, the Darwinian provision for the elimination of certain species by natural selection was as disturbing as the prospect



of social Darwinian progress appeared tantalizing. It is in this light that *Evolution and Ethics* was made relevant and significant to a mass audience. Seeking to provide the most effective answer to late Qing calamities, the pioneer translator made painstaking maneuvers to ensure that his selected Western propositions appeared critical but reasonable and practicable.

Assertive struggle and self-preservation for a better society become two recurring postulates throughout *Tianyanlun* mostly in the form of commentaries. For instance, after the discussion of natural selection in the light of the Malthusian theory in the chapter 'Tendency to Vary', the translator 'laments' the gradual extirpation of American and Australian aborigines by 'resourceful' imperialistic races and poses this as apprehension to 'perceptive' patriots who aim to 'preserve the group and progress' and who know that it is futile to remain Sinocentric (TYL, I, 3: 76). A similar outcry recurs in a 1901 letter in which Yan surmises that China may follow the fate of India and Poland, which have fallen under foreign rule, after the Scramble for Concessions in China has proven the Self-Strengthening Movement and reform programmes futile; he also pities the seeming inferiority of the yellow race vis-à-vis the white, as it appears that only those things and businesses under foreign control thrive while those under Chinese management falter.<sup>33</sup>

Yan manipulates the multiple meanings of the Chinese word for species, *zhong*, which can mean biological species, physical type or human race, and uses it interchangeably with another word *qun* 群, which can be used as a quantifier or a verb, meaning group,

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<sup>33</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu' 與張元濟書 [Letters to Zhang Yuanji], 1899-1921, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 524-57 (p. 544).

flock, species, gathering or mass. In this way, he reshapes Darwin's struggle between different organic species specifically as the struggle between human groups and races.<sup>34</sup> In fact, in the earlier critique 'Whence Strength', he has already conjured up the concept of *qun* as illustrated by Confucian scholar Xunzi, that the ability to *qun* or to be united as a group is what differentiates human from animals. Pusey suggests that Yan sees Xunzi's exposition on '*qun*', or social mass, as similar to Spencer's metaphor of 'social organism', analogizing '*qun*' as 'society' and recasting social solidarity as contributing to the strength of the nation, posing it as an important element in the struggle for existence, a Chinese version of social Darwinism.<sup>35</sup> This collectivistic social orientation of *qun* is different from the liberal egalitarian orientation of the Western term 'society'. Yan's decision to present 'society' as *qun* is as calculated as inevitable, for there is no existing term that embodies the denotative and connotative values of 'society' in traditional Chinese. The modern rendering of 'society' – *shehui* 社會 – is actually a semantic translation borrowed from the Japanese translation of 'society', a method widely practiced starting from the late nineteenth century. *Shehui* in traditional Chinese, however, means a festive gathering on the day of sacrifice to the God of land.<sup>36</sup>

Besides, the conception of the Western liberal 'individual' per se – as a free subject

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<sup>34</sup> Darwin's full title is *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

<sup>35</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, pp. 61-67.

<sup>36</sup> In classical Chinese, *she* refers to the God of Earth, the place or day of worship of such a god, a group of people with a common interest (such as in poets society or chess society) or a minor administrative unit composing of twenty-five households, while *hui* means convergence, a group, a meeting, a fair or an opportunity. See *Cihai* 辭海 [Sea of Words Dictionary] (Shanghai: Cishu Chubanshe 辭書出版社, miniature ed. of 1979; first publ. 1936), p. 1577; *Ciyuan* 辭源 [Dictionary of Etymology] (Beijing:



who exalts one's energy to the utmost for one's own interest and whose rights and liberties are protected by the modern democratic state – hardly exists in the Chinese conceptual grid. In fact such an 'individual' would have been branded unrighteous and indecorous by Confucian standards. Rather, there is the notion of the 'self' (*ji*) 己, whose existence is rationalized in terms of its moral obligation toward the family, kin, the neighborhood, the state and the whole nation – a hierarchy in which 'society' does not have a unique place, and which is based more on moral-political roles than social-legal functions, requiring more self-restraint than self-assertion. This hierarchy supports a Confucian 'society' in which a gentleman's goal is proper cultivation of the self, regulation of the family, governing of the state and ultimate attainment of a tranquil and happy empire as prescribed in *The Great Learning*, and in which the ruling class, the intelligentsia and the collective mass, or *min* 民 [people] and *zhong* 眾 [the masses], are all subordinates of the ruler and his state.<sup>37</sup>

It is important to note, therefore, that Yan's conception of 'society' involves a sort of collective culmination of the 'self', and his ideal society allows the individual to exercise freedom and creativity and strive one's best not only for one's own interest, but also, more importantly, for the interests of the whole community. For instance, Yan repeatedly stresses in his commentaries that an orderly society allows 'human to exercise freedom without infringing upon other people's freedom', in the chapters

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Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1988; first publ. 1915), pp. 795, 1227-28.

<sup>37</sup> Although the Confucian social hierarchy appears to be much more elitist than egalitarian, it is important to note that many Confucian thinkers stress that the people is the basis of the state. For instance, Mencius once said, 'The people are of supreme importance; the altars to the gods of earth and grain come next; last comes the ruler.' See D. C. Lau (trans.), *Mencius*, p. 196. Confucius in *Jiayu* 家語 [Family Instructions] said, 'The ruler is a boat and the people are water. Water can float a boat and also overturn

‘Forgiveness and Failure’ 恕敗 (TYL, I, 14: 187) and ‘Evolution of Evil’ 演惡 (II, 15: 422), ascribing this ‘definition’ of freedom directly to Spencer and his ‘Principles of Morality’, a chapter from which he translated as ‘Qunyi’ 群誼 [Group Fraternity]. In the chapter ‘Enhancing the Society’ 善群, Yan suggests that orderly society would be pertinent to a race that has progressed to an advanced state and whose people are governed by three golden rules as prescribed by Spencer: proportional consumption and productivity for the adult; non-infringement of each other’s right to land; prevalence of the group over the self in case of conflict of interest (I, 17: 225). The latter is of course a deliberate manipulation of Spencer.

Having hybridized the traditional coordinates of ‘self’, ‘people’ and ‘race’ and the Western coordinates of ‘individual’ and ‘society’, Yan relates *qun*, his Chinese equivalent of ‘society’, to ‘polity’ and presents Western society to his readers as a better governed and more advanced model than the maladministered Chinese government. Taking ‘race’ for ‘species’ and associating it seamlessly with society and government, and then relating this to hopeful preservation of the Chinese species through progressive social evolution, Yan is synthesizing self-assertion and artificial selection as his prescription for self-strengthening. Liang Qichao mentions that *Tianyanlun* bore the earlier title of *Zhigong Tianyanlun* 治功天演論 before first publication, which means ‘On Orderly Governance and Evolution of Nature’.<sup>38</sup> Evidently, therefore, Yan manifests the same tendency as the social Darwinians to apply the concept of

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it.’ *Ciyuan*, p. 927, my translation.

<sup>38</sup> Liang Qichao 梁啟超, ‘Lun Yishu’ 論譯書 [On Translation], in *Yinbingshi Wenji* 飲冰室文集 [Collected Essays of the Ice-drinker’s Studio], 16 vols. (Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局), 1960; first publ. 1915), I, 1: 64-76.



evolutionary progress to human society, which is to exert so much influence on his contemporaries.<sup>39</sup> Both tendencies are pointed out clearly by Yan's mentor Wu Rulun in his foreword to *Tianyanlun*, stating that 'the Western science of evolution' serves as reference for government administrators, and that nature and governance are both subject to evolution (TYL, 1).

Lennart Lundberg suggests that Yan sides with social Darwinism and its relentless assertive ethics for he believes that China is bullied for its weakness and thus has to be strong to reassert herself and be respected as equal with other countries.<sup>40</sup> This is quite true. For instance, in the chapter 'Human Selects', Yan comments that artificial selection of good species 'is the secret clue to the nurture of population and accumulation of wealth' (I, 6: 113). In the chapter 'Enhancing the Society', Yan agrees with Huxley that it is important to establish a meritocratic society placed 'in the hands of those who are endowed with the largest share of energy, of intellectual capacity, of tenacity of purpose, of industry' (EE, 41-42). But, again equating society with polity, he adds that a fair and just appraisal system should bring not only power and wealth but also 'progress of the race' (TYL, I, 17: 225). This may be interpreted as his frustration with the *keju* appointment system. Yan then states very clearly in the next chapter, titled 'Resumption of Courses' 新反, that the creation of favourable conditions and elimination of unfavourable species, when applied to human society, foster the preservation and nourishment of the people, enhancing the group and progress of the

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<sup>39</sup> Schwartz says that in *Tianyanlun*, Yan 'makes clear his profound commitment to social Darwinism and to the ethic implicit in social Darwinism' and that 'this ethics implies nothing less than a revolution of values in China'. The latter statement implies Yan's profound overhaul of the Chinese conceptual grid. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, pp. 111-12.

<sup>40</sup> Lennart Lundberg, *Lu Xun as a Translator* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 1989), p. 20.

society (I, 18: 234).

The most overt example is in the commentary to the chapter 'Evolution of Evil', where the translator follows Spencer's application of the biological formula of progressive evolution of living organisms to society and associates it with *qun*: the formulae of 'things compete', 'nature selects' and 'unification' (*tihe*) 體合 [body, integrate] operate the same way in living organisms (like amoeba) as in society, and as such, the ideal polity would come as the natural result of the free play of evolution (II, 15: 422). Ironically, Yan emphasizes that the free play of evolution involves uninterrupted righteous governance rather than non-action (*ibid*). This view he puts as Spencerian but his hybrid actually deviates substantially from Spencerian political libertarianism and non-intervention of individualism.

Max Huang suggests that Yan manipulated the individualistic conception of self-assertion, heroic for Huxley and liberal for Smith, in his own Neo-Confucian conception of the integration of selves to form a collective entity, and moreover the mobilization of self-interest in pursuit of the common good.<sup>41</sup> Yan is in fact grafting Spencerian self-assertion with a positivistic bent onto the late Qing consensus for

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<sup>41</sup> Huang suggests that Yan's conception of the integration of selves to form a collective entity draws not only from Huxley and Smith, but also from nationalistic scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-82) who advocates the patriotic notion of *minde* 民德 [people's virtue], and thus is not exactly the same as the kind of individualism pertaining to Machiavelli or Hobbes. Huang Kewu 黃克武, 'Cong Zhuiqu Zhengdao Dao Rentong Guozu: Ming Mo Zhi Qing Mo Zhongguo Gongsu Guannian De Chongzheng' 從追求正道到認同國族：明末至清末中國公私觀念的重整 [From Pursuit of the Proper Dao to Consensus on the Nation State: Reconstruction of the Chinese Concepts of Public and Private in late Ming to late Qing], talk at the Institute of Sociology, Tsing-Hwa University 清華大學社會學研究所, 12 April 1989.



self-strengthening to formulate his own hybrid of ‘enlightened self-assertion’ (*kaiming ziying*) 開明自營. The adjective ‘*kaiming*’ in Chinese means enlightened or open-minded. To Yan, the Confucian contra-distinction between righteousness (*yi*) 義 and gain/expediency (*li*) 利, which suppresses assertion and the desire for gain as unrighteous, is a serious obstruction to material progress and is highly inopportune at a time when the buzzwords of the day are ‘power’ and ‘wealth’.<sup>42</sup> In fact the Chinese word for ‘self’, *ji*, is often associated with another word *si* 私, which means private, personal, selfish, secret or even illicit, so that it can acquire a negative sense and is conceived as what opposes the collective, or *gong* 公. This has to do with the Confucian view of the individual as an integral part of a broader social-political hierarchy with different moral-political roles on different strata. Yan is to break the unhealthy distinction between *gong* and *si*, *yi* and *li* in the translation of *Wealth of Nations*.

Yan hybridizes a new moral formula that would operate in the best interest of society by mobilizing the Western spirit of enterprise, freedom and pleasure-seeking but then deducting from the concoction the Spencerian free play of individualism, and by construing a complementary relationship between the Chinese concepts of ‘the self’

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[http://mx.nthu.edu.tw/~iosoc/speech/speech88\\_2/speech0412\\_2.htm](http://mx.nthu.edu.tw/~iosoc/speech/speech88_2/speech0412_2.htm)

<sup>42</sup> Given Confucius’ social-moral concern, his teachings focus more on ethical pursuit than material pursuit. Examples abound in the *Analects*. See Legge (trans.), *The Chinese/English Four Books* = 漢英四書 (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1992). For instance, the Confucian master says: ‘He who acts with a constant view to his own advantage will be much murmured against’ (p. 91); ‘The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain’ (p. 93). But Confucius’ view on gain should not be taken as absolute, for he also remarks: ‘The man, who in the view of gain thinks of righteousness...may be reckoned a COMPLETE man’ (p. 193); ‘When the person in authority makes more beneficial to the people the things from which they naturally derive benefit; - is not this being beneficent without great expenditure?’ (p. 256) This is one of the primordial

and ‘the collective’. Associating self-assertion with struggle and enterprise and then conjuring it for and, indeed, subjugating it to the collectivistic group or people, he constructs a new coordinate of ‘enlightened self-assertion’ to reconcile the difference between self-interest and selfishness and to strike a healthy balance on the seeming conflict between the self and the collective. As he comments in the chapter titled ‘Orderly Society’ 群治, ‘enlightened self-assertion’ is planted in justice and thus beneficial to the society, in the same way that Adam Smith believes the pursuit of self-interest, not necessarily unjust or anti-social, will bring the most gain to the economy, for the enlightened individual knows the difference between self-interest and selfishness and would strive for mutual gain and benefit (II, 16: 433). There is a trace of utilitarianism here; to a considerable extent, it was this kind of Smithian utilitarianism that induced Yan to translate *The Wealth of Nations*.<sup>43</sup>

But Yan’s mediation of the dichotomy between ‘self’ and ‘collective’ is reminiscent of the Confucian projection of a teleological state of ‘Great Harmony’, in which the whole nation belongs to the collective (*gong*). His intention was of course different from Kang Youwei, who conjured the age-old *datong* prophesy to legitimize his reform rationale, which would be ‘retrogressive’ to Yan. The traditional conception of individual self-cultivation and a self-denying ethical path of the *dao* are incompatible with the assertive path he hybridized. Yan’s wish was to mobilize the selves to assert themselves to form a strong and united collective, and the pertaining selfless, collectivistic and meritocratic streaks agree with the overall Confucian conceptual grid, and ring a bell

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Confucian virtues that Yan seeks to rejuvenate.

<sup>43</sup> Schwartz points out that Smithian utilitarianism is optimistic that enlightened assertion will lead to benefit of the majority due to inborn human sympathy and morality. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and*



with Confucian scholars. Yan took a great leap forward by replacing the Confucian ethical code of self-restraint by enlightened self-assertion, and furthermore, self-cultivation by collective cultivation. In his translation, he does not only reiterate his intention to enhance the race or nation through self-assertion and artificial selection, but also assures his readers that this is a major thesis of Huxley and Spencer, which is of course a distortion.

Spencer advocates naturalism and non-human intervention, an approach that Yan likens to Daoist non-action *wuwei* (I, 5: 104), while Huxley's concerns are more humanitarian-oriented than society-oriented, as he clarifies that in the modern world, social progress should be practised not through artificial selection but through a 'course of conduct' and 'the creation of conditions more favourable than those of the state of nature, to the end of facilitating the free expansion of the innate faculties of the citizen, so far as it is consistent with the general good' (EE, 43). Pusey suggests that Yan tried to translate the best book he could find to instill awe for evolution and wanted his countrymen to hear Huxley's Darwinian call to action that Yan considered not too different from the self-regulatory Chinese *dao*, implying that the *dao* helps those who help themselves.<sup>44</sup> Yan's hybridized discourse promotes enlightened self-interest and collaterally patriotic selflessness, and serves to mobilize the people for unity that would hopefully preserve the Chinese race in her struggle for existence. This model appears more realistic than the anachronistic Confucian one, for it duly recognizes the likelihood of human weaknesses and hostile externalities and, moreover, offers a way to positively deal with them.

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Power, pp. 116-23.

<sup>44</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, p. 173.

Yan mentions in the preface of *Tianyanlun* that Huxley's present work 'aims to remedy the Spencerian free play of nature', 'contains certain views quite similar to traditional Chinese tenets' and 'keeps reiterating the notions of self-strengthening and preservation of the race' (TYL, 16). The second statement is an exaggeration while the last a false representation, typical examples of Yan's presumption but also an exemplar of Chinese presumptive discourse, in which varied quotations are pooled for collective argumentation without obligation to serious referencing or clear differentiation between the opinions of other people and one's own.<sup>45</sup> An obvious reason is that most aspiring intellectuals share a common rhetorical discourse, as they would essentially study the same classics and commentaries required by *keju* examinations, so that utilitarianism often becomes an overriding concern. However obscure this kind of presumptive discourse may appear by modern standards, it allows Yan Fu liberty to construct his hybridized conceptual grid to suit his purpose.

Yan's presumptive discourse portrays more his own points on social Darwinism than the views of Darwin, Huxley and Spencer.<sup>46</sup> Examples abound. In the commentary on

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<sup>45</sup> This kind of presumptive discourse is manifested in the tradition of exegetical commentaries, sub-commentaries and sub-commentaries on sub-commentaries, where the commentator's views are often embedded in extended quotations from past commentaries without clear demarcation. Some of these works are titled 'True Meaning' (*zhengyi*) 正義 or 'Original Meaning' (*benyi*) 本義 of a certain classic.

<sup>46</sup> Wang Zhongjiang says that far from promoting Darwinian evolution, Yan Fu is actually promoting his own version of social Darwinism. He opines that Yan's translation gives one the impression that Darwin, Huxley and Spencer are all Social Darwinist but in fact only Spencer is a Social Darwinist. Wang Zhongjiang 王中江, *Yan Fu Yu Yukichi Fukuzawa – Zhongri Qimeng Sixiang Bijiao* 嚴復與福澤諭吉 – 中日啓蒙思想比較 [Yan Fu and Yukichi Fukuzawa – A Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Enlightenment Thought] (Kaifeng: Henan Daxue Chubanshe 河南大學出版社, 1991), p. 250.



the chapter titled ‘Mutual Competition’ 互爭, for instance, in his critique on the difference between Spencer and Huxley, he remarks that although it is the usual stance of both persons to go against artificial intervention of the courses of nature, just like naturalistic Daoist cosmology, *Evolution and Ethics* offers rectification to excessive play of ruthless self-assertion, approving Huxley’s disapproval of excessive Spencerian libertarianism which suggests that any ‘preservation of the self and the race and the grouping together of human for progress’ through prescriptive knowledge or reason betrays the cause of nature (TYL, I, 5: 104-05).

Later, however, in the chapter titled ‘Restraining Selfishness’ 制私, he comments that Huxley’s exposition on societal evolution is less sophisticated than Spencer’s and that the former’s appeal to restrain ruthless self-assertion by sympathy and self-restraint is illogical (EE, 18-30). Yan considers that sympathy actually arises out of humans’ concern for their own interest, a principle already exemplified by Adam Smith, and so the so-called ‘ethical process’ should be the product rather than the antithesis of the cosmic process (TYL, I, 13: 177). He even relates this to Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), famous historian of the Han Dynasty, who says that competition stems from society’s inability to secure sufficient resources, which in turn arises from the lack of love to build up social bond. Yan opines that such pithy observation must have originated from ancient thinkers much earlier than Ban (I, 13: 177-78).

Yan continues in another chapter, titled ‘Summary of Themes’ 最旨, his challenge to Huxley’s statement that the ‘rigorous scientific method of applying the principles of evolution to human society hardly comes within the region of practical politics’ (EE, 34). He introduces in a long commentary Spencerian social optimism, which holds

social progress to be an indicator of evolutionary progress, an important point that Yan also sees included in Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*, which he translated (TYL, I, 15: 194-97). Also, in the chapter titled 'Resumption of Courses' 新反, which corresponds to the end of Huxley's Prolegomena, Yan dismisses as absurd the possibility of cyclical evolution of upward and downward courses and the rationalization of renunciation as different from and better than happiness (EE, 43-45). He thinks that the ascetic also derives pleasure from self-denial, and virtue equals happiness in the golden age, though he agrees totally with Huxley's other arguments that a perfect society would be conceivable but not attainable and that the world is charged with both vice and evil, happiness and trouble (TYL, I 18: 236-37). Thus *Tianyanlun* offers contemporary Chinese an intelligible intellectual synthesis of both foreign and indigenous thinking to answer their existential problems and quench their intellectual thirst.

One striking consequence of Yan's presumptive and purpose-based rewriting is his preoccupation with evolutionary progress and self-assertion at the expense of ethics in *Tianyanlun*. The transposing of the title itself, *Tianyanlun*, that is, 'On the Evolution of Nature', infers that Huxley's major exposition on evolutionary ethics in the main text after the prolegomena is either sidelined, deleted or turned into arguments concerning the preservation and strengthening of the Chinese race. Pusey suggests that morality does not pose a problem to Chinese evolutionary progress as it does to social Darwinism in the West because Yan's construction of evolutionary struggle lies in the solidarity of the Chinese race as a collective entity whose individuals value self-assertion over selfishness and preservation of the group over that of the self, and thus do not end up in the simple and ruthless conclusion that might is right as in the



West.<sup>47</sup> This is understandable, for as shown in chapter 2, Yan Fu believed that the people were morally, physically and intellectually unfit, and the primary concern of China, still a patriarchal society, was a survival problem rather than the ethical problem that had troubled (Western) modern political societies. This can be seen in his 1902 letter to a newspaper, where he quoted Huxley as saying that Western governments could achieve yet greater feats of excellence if scientific methods were fully applied; to Yan, this was in marked contrast to the waning Chinese tradition that underestimated the importance of science and violated international law.<sup>48</sup>

So it is evident that whenever Huxley reflects on the role evolution plays in ethics and on the extent to which modern progress in natural knowledge can help morality, Yan tends to switch the focus to the whence of evolutionary progress or how China is losing out in the evolutionary battle. The most striking example is his rewriting of the main Huxleian thesis, that 'social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process', which will necessitate the survival of the ethically best rather than 'the fittest', which requires self-restraint, mutual respect and cooperation for the benefit of the majority, with the help of laws and moral precepts (EE, 81-82). Ironically, quite the opposite is stated in the last but second chapter of *Tianyanlun*, titled 'Orderly Society' 群治, which begins by challenging the propounders of evolutionary ethics for neglecting the fact that humans possess an intrinsic evil nature apart from a good nature (TYL, II, 16: 432). Yan then goes on to associate 'society' not with a liberal and egalitarian community,

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<sup>47</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, pp. 64-67.

<sup>48</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Waijiaobao Zhuren Shu' 與“外交報主人”書 [Letter to the Editor of *Foreign Affairs Journal*], 1902, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 557-65 (p. 559).

but with 'orderly governance' (*zhi*) 治: 'Progress in governance dwindles the potency of the cosmic process; the acme of state and empire administration illustrates the accomplishment in governance and invalidates the cosmic process.' (432) Accordingly Huxley's proposition on the survival of 'those who are ethically the best' is altered to match a more Chinese concern: the survival of 'those good at preserving the society' 善保群者, just as ancient sages had done (ibid).

Yan Fu's collateral belief in social Darwinism and evolutionary assertion, stemming from his own social-political concern, is summarized in the last two chapters of *Tiyanlun*, 'Orderly Society' and 'Evolutionary Progress' 進化, the headings themselves revealing the most important messages of his critique to his readers. In the commentary to the former chapter, Yan upholds enlightened self-assertion and challenges the Confucian misrepresentation and suppression of self-assertion and profit-making, a marked contrast to modern Western values, especially in the area of economics, which to Yan is the most beneficial discipline in modern society as it studies the attainment of bilateral interest over self-interest (432-33). He further compares the struggle between cosmic hostility and ethical assertion to certain tenets prevalent in the Tang Dynasty, but differentiates it from Song metaphysics (433). In the last chapter, the translator adds that 'competition with nature' is inevitable nowadays to attain orderly governance, which can turn harm into interest through better understanding of the nature of things, and does not equal inauspicious contravention of nature as perceived in the traditional grid (II, 17: 441). He further reckons that the wealth and power of modern Europe lies in its success in combating the cosmic process and its resultant command of material progress for the benefit of humankind (ibid).



Here Yan is obviously defying traditional dogma that required unquestioned conformity with the principles of nature, *dao*, and subservience to the emperor as the son of heaven. The remedy to outmoded tradition, he reiterates, is Western epistemology, which prefers the spirit to enquire, dialectic and innovation to compliance, concord and imitation (442). Besides, Yan is sharing the same wishful thinking as Huxley that human ‘intelligence and will, guided by sound principles of investigation, and organized in common effort, may modify the conditions of existence’ and ‘change the nature of human himself’ (EE, 85). Yan adds that this can be achieved by people who possess tenacity, enterprise, diligence, self-discipline and commitment to society (TYL, II, 17: 442). These qualities are obviously what he asks of his compatriots and what strikes a more vigorous note than Huxley’s ethical concern that ‘if we may permit ourselves a larger hope of abatement of the essential evil of the world...I deem it an essential condition that we should cast aside the notion that the escape from pain and sorrow is the proper object of life’ (EE, 85-86).

This fervour is echoed at the end of *Tianyanlun* when the translator plays up Huxley’s valourized conclusion – that ‘we must play the man’ and endeavour in ‘some work of noble note’ before the end (EE, 86) – by his direct appeal to his Chinese readers: ‘May we who share the same dedication pledge to fulfil this commitment.’ (TYL, II, 17: 443) It can be said eventually that both *Evolution and Ethics* and *Tianyanlun* strive to make an ethical statement, though the rationale and objective are quite the opposite. The author tries to persuade audacious Victorians to suppress the relentless cosmic process through ethical progress, while the translator urges the Chinese to combat the antagonistic imperialistic process through self-assertive evolutionary progress. Through the manipulative socialization process aforementioned, Yan Fu has

constructed a modern evolutionary reality for the reader, not just of the translation, but also of the original.

It is worth mentioning that Yan Fu's socialization also involves reshaping the textual grid of the source text to fit into the textual grid of indigenous literature. It is obvious that right from the outset in *Tianyanlun*, there is a change in narrative perspective from Huxley's first person to Yan's third person point of view, a change that continues throughout the translation.<sup>49</sup> Wang Zuoliang praises Yan's restructuring of the long embedded sentences of the source text into a smooth flow of short sentences and remarks that the change in narrative perspective is probably an attempt to make his translation read like traditional fiction and historical prose; he even suggests that Yan's

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<sup>49</sup> Huxley's *Prolegomena* begins like this:

It may be safely assumed that, two thousand years ago, before Caesar set foot in southern Britain, the whole country-side visible from the windows of the room in which I write, was in what is called "the state of nature." Except, it may be, by raising a few sepulchral mounds, such as those which still, here and there, break the flowing contours of the downs, man's hands had made no mark upon it; and the thin veil of vegetation which overspread the broad-backed heights and the shelving sides of the coombs was unaffected by his industry.

*Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*, p. 1.

To offer a glimpse of Yan Fu's rewriting, I attempt a literal back-translation of 'the corresponding' part below, following as closely as possible Yan's structure in Chinese. The earliest extant manuscript is unpunctuated, the usual practice for traditional prose, so slashes are used here to indicate natural pauses as perceived by a native reader of traditional prose. There is no need for plural marker or tense marker in Chinese grammar; below, the number follows the idiom of English and the existential present is used.

Huxley stays alone in his room / in the south of England / backing onto the hills and facing the wilderness / The scene outside his doorsteps / is clearly visible as if it lies in front of his coffee table / Thus he imagines two thousand years ago / before the Roman General Caesar sets foot / there could be what kind of view / Presumably only vegetation created by heaven / man's work not yet done / What shows traces of habitation / are merely a few sepulchres / scattering in undulating mounds / and that the bushes and forests / running wild at the foot of the hills / are as untrimmed as they are today / is beyond doubt.



narrative that follows, in brief terse parallel structures about what Huxley describes as ‘the unceasing struggle for existence’ of wild vegetation, reads like a battlefield report, possibly because he wants to present this as a work strongly steeped in ‘historical consciousness’, which is wholly appropriate for such a seminal work epitomizing human’s fierce combat with nature in perpetual evolutionary struggle.<sup>50</sup>

Wang Kefei is right in saying that the use of third person perspective ‘facilitates’ Yan’s rewriting and commentary-translation.<sup>51</sup> The use of the omniscient point of view gives the translator as much freedom as a narrator or critic to manipulate his materials, and allows Yan greater flexibility in interpreting the source text and more importantly, in sketching pertinent materials contained therein to become relevant propositions in his hybridized grid. Assuming the voice of a narrator, the translator can spontaneously add interrogatives, exclamations, interjections and assertive statements, or employ the indicative, imperative and subjunctive moods interchangeably throughout the translated text, not restricted to chapter-end commentaries.<sup>52</sup>

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*Tiyananlun*, p. 41.

<sup>50</sup> Wang Zuoliang 王佐良, ‘Yan Fu De Yongxin’ 嚴復的用心 [Yan Fu’s Intention], in *Lun Yan Fu Yu Yanyi Mingzhu* 論嚴復與嚴譯名著 [On Yan Fu and His Famous Translations], ed. by Shangwu Yinshuguan Editorial Section 商務印書館編輯部 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), pp. 22-27, (pp. 23-24).

<sup>51</sup> Wang Kefei *Fanyi Wenhua Shiluan* 翻譯文化史論 [On the History of Culture in Translation] (Shanghai: Waiyu Jiaoyu Chubanshe 外語教育出版社, 1997), p. 121.

<sup>52</sup> Examples abound throughout the whole translation. Just for the sake of illustration, in chapter 1, for instance, Huxley’s confident statement beginning ‘It is as little to be doubted, that...’ is represented as a rhetorical question: ‘...and who is to question this?’, and in the chapter-end commentary, Yan comments emphatically on Spencer’s System of Synthetic Philosophy, ending with the ‘important principles of preservation of race and progressive evolution’: ‘Alas! There has not been a similar work since there are mankind in Europe.’ (TYL, pp. 41-43). Pathetic interjections like *wuhu* 嗚呼 and *jiehu* 嗟呼 are to recur throughout the translation, and also in the translated novels of contemporary famous translator Lin Shu,

Another interesting example is how he reshapes the textual grid of Part II, the main body of *Evolution and Ethics*, where Huxley begins with an introductory analogy of 'Jack and the Bean-stalk' to illustrate the life cycle of living things 'from a state of relative simplicity and latent potentiality of the seed to the full epiphany of a highly differentiated type, thence to fall back to simplicity and potentiality' (EE, 46-50). This cosmic impermanence, in which 'naught endures save the flow of energy and the rational order which pervades it', engages civilized humankind in contemplative thought about self-assertion as the gladiatorial way of survival, a formerly glorified quality that has become despicable by the moral standards of an organized polity, causing 'pains and griefs' and the antithesis of intellectual progress, namely 'ennui' (50-55). Such ethical concerns have led to the development of ethical systems, the conception of justice and a punishment and reward system based on 'desert', or motive, but the sage still finds it hard 'to bring the course of evolution into harmony with even the elementary requirements of the ethical ideal of the just and the good' (56-59).

Yan Fu re-orientates this part into five chapters in the second part of *Tianyanlun* as a science and moral lesson for his readers. The introductory analogy of the 'Bean-stalk' and all its subsequent recurrences are cut, as the alien allegory is not coherent with the overall textual and conceptual coordinates modulated by the translator.<sup>53</sup> As an allegorical parallel, however, the translator begins the first chapter of this 'Discussion'

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which are also generally considered as rewriting of the source text.

<sup>53</sup> Huxley begins this part from the first person point of view:

There is a delightful child's story, known by the title of "Jack and the Bean-stalk," with which my contemporaries who are present will be familiar...It is a legend of a bean-plant...My present enterprise has a certain analogy to that of the daring adventurer.



(*Lun*) part, titled 'Energy and Epiphany' 能實, with a quotation from Daoist classic *Zhuangzi*, which states that the *dao* is more conspicuous upon microscopic study and inserts a note that Francis Bacon (1561-1626) holds *gezhi* 格致, or science, to be human's worthy pursuit and that all things under heaven are equal (TYL, II, 1: 248). These two quotations are meant to tease xenophobic Confucian conservatives who slight Western knowledge as craft-oriented and non-essential, and to convince them that science is 'equivalent' to *gezhi*, the pursuit of knowledge through the investigation of things as prescribed in the *Great Learning*, and its importance is already mentioned by ancient sages.

Assuming aptly the voice of an omniscient narrator, Yan supplements Huxley's point on the growth of a plant by a brief account of photosynthesis, and offers the Changjiang River as an example for Huxley's comparison of the growth of a plant to the widening of a stream (249). In the next chapter titled 'Worries' 憂患, he tunes down Huxley's worry that 'ape and tiger methods of the struggle for existence are not reconcilable with sound ethical principles' by stating that pain and suffering stem from the counterbalance of human forces (2: 260-62). He begins by adding that religion, moral precepts, legal and penal codes originate from the fear of heaven and with an end to restrict the people (260), and supplements Huxley's elucidation on self-assertion and the growth of civilization with the statement that ancient sages, taking part in world destiny, is the product rather than the agent of evolutionary change (261).

Yan's detachment of Huxleian ethics from evolution should not simplistically be branded as unfaithful rendering, for this fails to account for the complicated nature of

translation. Worse still, it shrouds the deeper intention and significance of Yan Fu's translation project; many critics just tend to believe that Yan translated (*Tianyanlun*) mainly for utilitarian purposes, to provide justification for immediate reform to save his country out of a political and cultural crisis.<sup>54</sup> So far as *Tianyanlun* is concerned, Yan's discussion (*lun*) is not only confined to cosmic evolution (*tianyan*); it also covers ethics, though it is his critique of Huxleian ethics, social Darwinian ethics and ethical tenets of different streams of thought in the world. Yan is in fact mediating between different philosophies in search of transcendence, of the most pertinent life philosophy, not just about human conduct or polity on earth, but about human as a cosmological being in search of the *dao*, a faith which generations of Confucian scholars had held, though their reference grid is conventionalized by institutionalization of Confucian learning. Yan's purpose is to mend this degenerative tradition, and more importantly, to translate for mediation and transcendence, inheriting the tradition of Chinese translators as discussed in the last two chapters.

All along, Yan is twisting Huxley's ethical concern into his Chinese concern. In the chapter titled 'Origin of Faith' 教源, he does not focus on how civilization brings along suffering, ennui and development of moral systems but associates faith with knowledge and world changes instead. He quotes Bacon as saying that learning is more important than faith and that for a nation undeveloped in *gezhi*, its policies would be ineffectual and its people stagnant in intellect, and echoes in the ensuing commentary that the

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<sup>54</sup> Here are two representative views. Yan's biographer Wang Shi suggests that Yan offered *Tianyanlun* as scientific justification for reform and self-strengthening. See Wang Shi's preface to *Yan Fu Ji*, I, pp. 1-13 (p. 11). Schwartz says that Yan translated Huxley first instead of Darwin or Spencer because of its more manageable length and difficulty. But it should be noted that several of Yan's ensuing translations are also voluminous and difficult. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, especially p. 98.



intellect of humankind reaches an apex during the sixth to third centuries BC, with Confucian, Daoist, Mohist and Legalist sages in China, Greek thinkers in Europe and Buddha in India (II, 3: 271-73). After a brief biography of Buddha and major Greek philosophers, he concludes that Western learning prefers innovation to tradition, while the great teachings of ancient Chinese thinkers are still confining learning two thousand years later (273-74). This represents typical Yanian critique of the Chinese tradition through East-West comparison, often suggesting the adoption of Western learning as the key to possible social and intellectual advancement.

The same message is provided in the next chapter titled 'Delimiting Motive' 嚴意, which corresponds to Huxley's elaboration on 'justice', as an end in itself achieved by weighing punishment and reward according to 'motive' (EE, 56-57). This point is twisted by the translator to denote a means to orderly governance. He extends the specification of motive as a penal criterion to cover not only the penal code of the state, but also the appraisal mechanism among government officials, clansmen and relatives (TYL, II, 4: 292-93). By the same token, Huxley's 'bond of the society' here, portrayed as the basis for the rationalization of justice (EE, 56), is expanded into several paragraphs on how the society's bond gets entrusted to the gentry and then usurped by the despotic ruler, and how this situation has been rectified in European states by virtue of human right and public justice (TYL, II, 4: 292). Righteousness thus becomes relevant not so much as a pure moral goal but as a powerful feature of the Western system to be emulated.

Conveniently therefore, Yan goes on to dilute Huxley's moral concern about the spontaneity of nature and conceals his highly charged condemnation of the cosmos

‘before the tribunal of ethics’ and the cogent outburst that ‘the conscience of man revolted against the moral indifference of nature’ (EE, 59). It is the randomness of nature that appeals to his concern, which can be utilized as counter-argument to the claim by ancient rulers, as recorded in the age-old *Book of History*, in attributing natural courses to heavenly justice, in the chapter titled ‘Heavenly Punishment’ 天刑 (TYL, II, 5: 301). He also adds his own ‘scientific explanation’ to the moral indifference of nature: the brutal Ghengis Khan (1162-1227) could build up a vast empire, while the notion of natural justice is irrelevant to either the docile deer or the wild wolf (302). At the end, he compares the theme of this chapter to two relevant Chinese creeds in the ending commentary: the *dao* of the universe ‘arouses the myriad things but does not share the anxieties of the sages’;<sup>55</sup> ‘heaven and earth are ruthless’ (303). The latter line begins a famous quadruplet from Daoist canon *Laozi*, which reads: ‘Heaven and earth are ruthless, and treat the myriad creatures as straw dogs; the sage is ruthless, and treats the people as straw dogs.’<sup>56</sup> Yan later remarks in his sub-commentary to *Laozi* that this Daoist creed constitutes ‘the archetype of the evolutionary discourse’ and ‘summarizes the gist of Darwin’s new theory’, and that ‘imitating nature (or heaven) is the prime of

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<sup>55</sup> The quotation comes from the *Xici* commentary to the *Classic of Changes* 易·繫辭上傳五章. See Richard John Lynn (trans.), *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> D. C. Lau (trans.), *Lao Tze: Tao Te Ching* (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 9, Chapter 5. Straw dogs are used for religious offering and dumped after use, irrespective of human’s preference, a natural fact that manifests the perpetual, prodigal, inartificial, unpremeditated but self-sustained nature of the cosmos, in which human virtues like benevolence and righteousness are inapplicable since the Daoist cosmos is not anthropomorphic. The sages, meditating the *dao*, shares and empathizes with the same spontaneous ease of the cosmos, and so in their eyes, the people are no different from straw dogs, which are all natural and equal products of the cosmos. See also Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Laozi Zhuyi Ji Pingjie* 老子註譯及評介 [Annotated Notes and Commentary to *Laozi*] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1987), pp.



orderly governance'.<sup>57</sup>

Of the three dominant indigenous ideologies, Yan sees an imminent tie between Daoism and evolutionary theory. Pusey suggests that just as the (social) Darwinians take evolution as agnostic and omnipresent, so does Yan see the self-existing *dao* in all things, though Yan's 'Darwinian Daoism' is tied to action, struggle and enlightened self-assertion, rather than typical Daoist non-action; moreover, the evolutionary theory changes Westerner's view of God as well as Chinese' view of the *dao*, though it denies neither.<sup>58</sup> To Yan, Daoist naturalism runs along the same line of thought as the Huxleian view that the 'unfathomable injustice of the nature of things', which is not at the command of sentient beings so that even ancient (Indian and Greek) sages are unable to 'bring the course of evolution into harmony with even the elementary requirements of the ethical ideal of the just and good' (EE, 58). But just as Yan explains in *Tianyanlun*, the word 'ruthless' is predicative rather than attributive in the original Daoist line 'heaven and earth are ruthless' 天地不仁 [lit. heaven, earth, negative, benevolence], so the negation should be interpreted as preclusion rather than discussion of the question of ruthlessness (TYL, II, 5: 303) and as such, Huxley's ethical concern is disarmed. Yan's association of the mechanical cosmos with Daoist naturalistic heaven represents a readily intelligible and highly productive proposition in his hybridized conceptual grid.

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<sup>57</sup> Yan Fu's remarks comes from his sub-commentary to the commentary of Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) on the Daoist classics *Laozi*. Yan Fu, *Houguan Yanshi Pingdian Laozi* 侯官嚴氏評點老子 [Sub-commentary to Wang Bi's Commentary to *Laozi* by Yan Fu from Houguan County] (Taibei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1905), p. 6.

From the mysterious Daoist discourse on evolution, Yan goes on to compare the mysterious *dao* with the Spencerian ‘ultimate unknowable’, which he considers as ‘extremely profound discussion’, similar to the Buddhist tenets of *advaita dharma-mukha* 不二法門 [intransmutable doorway to Buddhist enlightenment] and *acintya-prabhaavataa* 不可思議 [paradoxical enigma] (ibid).<sup>59</sup> Yan is switching to Buddhist rhetoric as Huxley gradually proceeds to a lengthy discussion on how different philosophies perceive the seeming disharmony between evolution and morality. The Buddhist doctrine of transmigration seems to Huxley a plausible vindication of how the cosmic process acts on humans: the sentient being passes on his ‘karma’ from generation to generation in the endless chain of natural causation, engendering the heredity of evils and sufferings, which could be ended by ‘Nirvana’, the enigmatic abolition of transmigration (EE, 60-68). Huxley even remarks that Buddhism ‘owes its marvelous success’ to its ‘ethical qualities’ (68).

Meanwhile, the Athenians’ belief in the existence of ‘an immanent, omnipotent and infinitely beneficent cause’ cannot explain the existence of ‘inherent evil’ (69-71). The Stoical belief in the highest human nature to execute ‘pure reason’ for ‘the ideal of the supreme good’ to be reunited with ‘the all-pervading logos’, that is, ‘Apatheia’, is to Huxley not particularly different from ‘Nirvana’, which serves to assure him that for the ‘ethical man’ who admits ‘the cosmos is too strong for him’, salvation might be

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<sup>58</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, p. 75-77.

<sup>59</sup> The corresponding terms in Sanskrit are *advaya dharmaparyāya* and *a-cintya*. Schwartz back-translates the latter term as ‘the inconceivable’, but I opt for ‘paradoxical enigma’ because Yan comments in a later chapter that *buke siyi*, being the most profound but abused Buddhist term, is different from ‘the indescribable’, ‘the unspeakable’ or ‘the unthinkable’, and involves the coexistence of seemingly opposite qualities (TYL, II, 10: 353-54).



found in 'absolute renunciation' (74-77). However strong and unethical the cosmic process may appear, Huxley makes a clear-cut distinction between the state of nature and the state of art (human), between the cosmic process and the ethical process, and repudiates the social Darwinian application of primitive cosmic struggle to civilized societies, for what is the fittest in cosmic nature depends upon physical conditions while in an organized polity, that should be judged by moral standard (78-81). As the bold defender of evolutionary ethics, Huxley is optimistic that social progress will bring about ethical progress. As society, civilization, science, law and moral standard advance (such as in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), not only can human 'modify the conditions of existence', they can also 'change the nature of man himself' to suppress evil without the need for renunciation (81-86).

Huxley's philosophical contemplation befits Yan's cosmological preoccupation, for mediation of the *dao* remains the deepest concern of the true Confucian gentleman. Yan retains most of the discussion on different faiths and philosophies but does not hesitate to add relevant facts and his own critique for polemical and educational purposes. As such, Huxley's ethical overtone is watered down. Yan begins this part by arguing that religions, originating from human anthropomorphism, often lead to dogmatism. Such misadventure, however, has long been minimized in the West with the advancement in science and positivism, citing Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Given his erudition in Buddhism, like many elite scholars at the time, he expands the subject into five chapters on Buddhist doctrines, such as *samsara* 輪迴 [transmigration] and *hetu-phala* 因果 [cause and effect] in Chapter 6, titled 'Explicating Buddhism' 佛釋, as well as *karma* 業 and *nirvana* 涅槃 in Chapter 10, titled 'Dharma' 佛法.

In Chapter 7, titled 'Karma' 種業, he inserts a comparison between *trayo-dhvanah* *hetu-phala* 三世因果 [cause and effect through three existences] and Plato's assertion on human's fall from the transcendental 'Idea'. He examines the possibility of redemption or further degeneration, and even suggests that Plato might have drawn from Buddhism, given the vicinity of India and Greece (II, 7: 320-21). The latter speculation appears unfounded, but Huxley himself also notes that 'in ancient times it was the fashion, even among the Greeks themselves, to derive all Greek wisdom from Eastern sources' and that although this has been recently denied, the truth might lie between the two extreme hypotheses (EE, 104, note 11). Yan expands on Huxley's exegesis on Brahmanic asceticism in the chapter 'Mortification' 冥往, and on Buddhist ontology and Berkeleian metaphysics in the chapter 'Real and Unreal' 真幻. In the latter chapter, Yan inserts Mill's skepticism of sense perception and a brief introduction to Descartes (1596-1650) and Cartesian epistemology, holding that logical reasoning marks the emergence of science over traditional idealism (TYL, II, 9: 336-39). Here the translator is probably insinuating the literati's indulgence in idealistic studies at home.

In the following chapters, Yan continues to develop on Huxley's ethical arguments purposefully to enlighten his readers and government administrators on orderly governance through lengthy addition and commentaries. He charts the Western events and philosophers discussed by Huxley against Chinese chronology and contrasts them with Chinese thinking to facilitate comprehension. For instance, an especially lengthy commentary is provided in the chapter 'Schools of Thought' 學派 on the various streams of Greek thinking, their intellectual link and main similarities and differences with Chinese philosophers (II, 11: 370-73). The translator draws an analogy between



peoples' misconception about the 'style of Epicurus' and that about the Mohist renunciation of kinship in the chapter 'Challenging Heaven' 天難 (II, 12: 394), and compares the Stoical 'Nature' with Song Neo-Confucian thinking on 'xing' 性 [nature], which ascribes supremacy to 'the pure reason' and 'li' 理 [metaphysical principle] respectively, in the chapter 'On Nature' 論性 (II, 13: 404). This kind of East-West comparison develops, again, into reproach of the Chinese tradition in the chapter 'Mending Nature' 矯性, where he insinuates degenerating mores into Confucian codes, citing the *Classic of Poetry* and the fate of certain fallen states in history as illustration, and contrasts the Chinese with Europeans, who to him are honest, resolute, young-blooded, fearless, gay and strong, and even with the Japanese, who are valorous and ready to sacrifice for their own party and reputation (II, 14: 412).

Mediating across different philosophies about life, Yan launches his most explicit refutation of Huxley in the chapter 'Evolution of Evil'. Huxley considers that ethics, however desirable, is irrelevant in cosmic evolution; thus the social Darwinian application of cosmic nature to society and its speculation that social progress will naturally raise good above evil are fallacies (EE, 78-80). But Yan says that 'this part is the worst of all seventeen chapters of the main discussion part, for Huxley lacks thorough study of Spencer's rationalization in his attempt to disprove him' (TYL, II, 15: 422-23). His view on this is ambivalent. While he is also against human following the ruthless game of nature, as the pristine Confucian notions of virtue and justice are still deeply ingrained in him, he tends to accept Spencerian optimism about the probability of a better future for the fit who survive and wishes this would apply to his country. For the same reason, he is not particularly concerned about social Darwinism being used as a pretext for Western imperialism. The Spencerian state in which the fit adult exerts

self-assertion in one's adjustment to increasingly complex social environment and takes from the society what one has contributed and gives way to the overall benefit of the whole society appeals to Yan as being an ideal strong modern state, and more importantly, as being the *dao* to achieve such a state. More than once, he specifies Spencerian tenets as the 'general rules' 公例 to the preservation of the race and to orderly governance of the society (I, 14: 187; 17: 255; II, 15: 422).

According to Yan, social Darwinism appears much more reasonable than Huxley's wishful thinking of the inexplicable attainment of ethical progress of the society (II, 16: 432). The latter wish subconsciously appeals to his Confucian conscience, but the former Legalist perspective appears to be most (politically) correct in that imperialistic era and offer the most pertinent remedy to the translator.<sup>60</sup> His reconciliation of both rationalization – enlightened (in other words, ethical) self-assertion of the fittest individuals united for a fittest Chinese state – points to a new *dao* to go about the modern world, a *dao* which appears Legalist but is intrinsically Confucian.<sup>61</sup> This is not surprising, given the Confucian tradition of mediation of the *dao*. As seen above, Huxley's brief reflection on different streams of world philosophy provides an

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<sup>60</sup> Legalism (*fajia*) 法家 was a major pre-Han school of thought, gradually assimilated by institutional Confucianism for its sophisticated thinking on statecraft. Legalists discussed government wholly from the perspective of the ruler or the state and preferred the stipulation of law, rectification of names and actualities, and a strict system of reward and punishment to suppress human's evil nature, which was different from the Confucian stance of enhancing human's good nature through moral cultivation. See for example, Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, I, pp. 312-35.

<sup>61</sup> It is worthwhile to note Li Zehou's argument that Yan's seeming preference for Legalist governance in fact conceals his support of Confucianism, especially in his late years when he was firmly against the Republican revolution. He also criticizes that some Communists, especially the 'Gang of Four' during the Cultural Revolution, presented Yan Fu as Legalist after 1949 as a pretext for their onslaught on Confucianism. Li Zehou, 'Lun Yan Fu', pp. 580-87.



excellent departure for Yan Fu to expand on his own cosmological mediation. Pusey notes that while Yan employs Daoism to help explain the mysterious force of evolution, he invariably has to resort to mainstream Confucianism to socialize it.<sup>62</sup> The Yanian discourse discussed above clearly shows that Yan's goal is more than socialization, and while his primary cosmological concern remains Confucian, his epistemological means also draw from indigenous Daoism, Buddhism, Legalism, and of course Western thinking. In a fascinating way, therefore, Yan operates on the Chinese conceptual grid renovating institutionalized coordinates for the charting of foreign propositions, manufacturing a hybridized discourse that is capable of generating new productive propositions. This operation is done at the cultural, metaphysical and cosmological levels in his critique of relevant Chinese and Western propositions.

Modern philosopher Fung Yu-lan (1885-1990) says *Tianyanlun* 'is not' Huxley's *Evolution and Ethic*, not a translation but a 'rewriting' based on the source text, with ample differences in focus and balance and injection of his own views in the commentaries.<sup>63</sup> But it is astounding to note that it is invariably this 'deliberate difference' that distinguishes his translation from the others. Li Zehou, for instance, remarks that the enormous impact of *Tianyanlun* stems from its uniqueness in 'not being a faithful translation of Huxley', 'not being a mechanical translation but addressing the needs of the times', with its own focus, commentary, rewriting and, as Yan himself puts it in his 'General Remarks on Translation', being 'more an exposition

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<sup>62</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, p. 165.

<sup>63</sup> *Guangming Ribao* 光明日報 [Guangming Daily], 8-9 March 1961; quoted in foreword by Feng Junhao 馮君豪, 1996, in Yan Fu (trans.), *Tianyanlun*, p. 4.

than a translation as it seeks to elaborate'.<sup>64</sup> Lundberg suggests that *Tianyanlun* has the most explosive power among Yan's widely read translations because he has made a very free translation, which allows the translator to express his own views and add extensive commentaries in which he relates the text to the Chinese conditions, making it easy to absorb; he is more faithful with later translations whose sources are texts of a more theoretical nature, and have less direct significance to the situation in China.<sup>65</sup> This shows that the success of a translation does not necessarily depend on abstracted 'standards' such as faithfulness or identity, but rather on the reception of the product presented as a text-in-the-culture.

The above discussion reveals the cultural environment in which Yan operated and how he strove to fulfil the needs of his time. It shows the creative socialization process in which Yan tried to manipulate sterile local coordinates and useful foreign postulates: incessant and involuntary evolution rather than an unchanging heavenly order, enlightened self-assertion rather than self-denial and selfishness, accumulated wealth and power rather than self-contained sufficiency, orderly governance based on sound social and legal institutions rather than passive teaching of the sage or goodwill of the virtuous ruler, and racial and social progress rather than constant inertia. The resultant hybridization of conceptual grids, as Lefevere's creative translator would have achieved, has not only made communication interestingly and attractively possible; it has also paved the way to subsequent rejuvenation of the Chinese conceptual grid and occupied a significant slot in the Chinese tradition during its long and tormenting transition to modernity.

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<sup>64</sup> Li Zehou, 'Lun Yan Fu', p. 591.

<sup>65</sup> Lundberg, pp. 20-21.



*Tianyanlun* had an enormous direct impact on the intellectual milieu of China in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and its repercussions last even today. First of all, Yan's coining of new terms adjusting Western propositions produced an evolutionary discourse that marks the beginning of massive hybridization and modernization of the Chinese conceptual grid. It is estimated that there were more than thirty different versions of *Tianyanlun*, authorized or otherwise, within the ten years after its release; the Shangwu Yinshuguan alone released twenty-four editions of *Tianyanlun* within twenty-two years after 1905.<sup>66</sup> There were also numerous articles promoting the translation.<sup>67</sup> Yanian terminology swiftly appeared as buzzwords in the press.<sup>68</sup> Translations on the subject abound, many included in popular series in the first few decades of the twentieth century and reprinted well after the 1960s, offering a glimpse of the popularity and long-lasting impact of Yanian discourse.<sup>69</sup> A translator even

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<sup>66</sup> Yan Fu, *Yan Fu Ji*, I, p. 45.

<sup>67</sup> Examples include Guo Xuecong 郭學聰, 'Darwin Xueshuo Zai Woguo De Chuanbo' 達爾文學說在我國的傳播 [The Dissemination of Darwinism in China], in *Shengwu Xuebao* 生物學報 [Biology Journal], 11(1959); Lu Jichuan 盧繼傳, *Jinhualun De Guoqu Yu Xianzai* 進化論的過去與現在 [Evolutionary Theory: Past and Present] (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe 科學出版社, 1980). All quoted in Wang Kefei 王克非, *Zhongri Jindai Dui Xifang Zhexue Sixiang De Shequ – Yan Fu Yu Riben Qimeng Xuezhe* 中日近代對西方政治哲學思想的攝取－嚴復與日本啓蒙學者 [Borrowing of Western Political and Philosophical Thinking in Modern China and Japan – Yan Fu and Japanese Enlightenment Scholars] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 1996), p. 68.

<sup>68</sup> The most important terms include *tianyan* 天演 [nature evolves], *wujing* 物競 [things compete], *tianze* 天擇 [nature selects], *jinhua* 進化 [progressing development], *taotai* 淘汰 [elimination], *shizhe shengcun* 適者生存 [the fit survives] and *yousheng liebai* 優勝劣敗 [the superior wins, the inferior loses].

<sup>69</sup> Those series include the 'Everyman Series' 人人叢書, 'Encyclopedic Series' 百科小叢書, 'Modern Knowledge Library' 新智識叢書 and 'All Things Library' 萬有文庫. Rewritings bearing the title 'evolution' include: Yu Songli 余松笠, *Tianyan Qianshuo* 天演淺說 [Elementary Discussion on Evolution] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1930); Chen Jianshan 陳兼善, *Jinhualun*

queried the lack of followers to explore deeper into the subject as he noted in the beginning of his preface Yan Fu's pioneer introduction of *Evolution and Ethics*.<sup>70</sup> In another adaptation, the translator extensively borrowed Yanian terminology and expanded on 'genetics' and the *tianyanlun* theory in a separate chapter despite abridging the twelve chapters of the source text into seven.<sup>71</sup>

Many modern writers are manifestly influenced by Yanian discourse. Hu Shi, for instance, cherishes fond memories of Yan Fu's enormous impact on the youth in his days, and how he adopted his penname 'Shizhi' 適之 [fit, function word] from *Tianyanlun*.<sup>72</sup> Lu Xun also testifies to the enormous impact of *Tianyanlun*.<sup>73</sup> His early

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*Gangyao* 進化論綱要 [An Outline of Evolution] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1930); Zhang Ziping 張資平, *Jinhualun: Renlei Jinhualun* 進化論: 人類進化論 [Evolution: The Evolution of Humankind] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1930); Zhang Dongmin 張東民, *Jinhualun Qianshi* 進化論淺釋 [Elementary Introduction to Evolution] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1930). The last one is based on William B. Scott's *The Theory of Evolution*.

<sup>70</sup> Yan Jicheng 嚴既澄, *Jinhualun Faxian Shi* 進化論發見史 (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1931), p. 1. This is based on John W. Judd's *The Coming of Evolution*.

<sup>71</sup> Hu Xiansu 胡先驌, *Zhiwuxue Xiaoshi* 植物學小史 [A Short History of Botany] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1930). This is a rewriting based primarily on Robert J. Harvey-Gibson's *Outlines of the History of Botany*. Presented as the author of the work, Hu remarks in the preface that 90% of the content is taken from Harvey-Gibson, whose chronological outline of the development of botany is abstracted and rearranged according to taxonomy with expansion on cryptogamic and phanerogamic botany and photosynthesis. He adapts Harvey-Gibson's sections 'Charles Darwin' (pp. 124-36) and 'Mendelism and Evolution' (pp. 223-33) in a chapter called 'Yechuanxue Yu Tianyanlun Zhi Lishi' 遺傳學與天演論之歷史 [History of Genetics and Evolution] (pp. 120-228).

<sup>72</sup> Hu Shi's given name at birth was Simi 嗣糜. He formally adopted the penname Shizhi after 1901 when he sat for the selection examination of a scholarship to the United States. Hu remarked that it was a trendy way to name newborns with Yanian terminology. He recalled that in his younger days, *Tianyanlun* was popular throughout the country and the concepts of 'the superior wins while the inferior loses' and 'survival of the fittest' raged like wild fire, burning the heart and blood of countless young people and raising a head-on alarm amid China's humiliating defeat. His Chinese teacher at a modern



writings and translations show strong traces of Yan's influence, borrowing from Yanian discourse and engaging in politically oriented rewriting.<sup>74</sup> All these suggest that *Tianyanlun* actually became a new cultural and ideological coordinate in the Chinese conceptual grid. Its impact and popularity far exceeds the translation of the more important thesis *Origin of Species: Wuzhong Youlai* 物種由來 [Origin of Species of Things] by Ma Junwu 馬君武 (1881-1940), published in Liang Qichao's popular *New People Miscellany* in 1902. However, Yan's impact remained primarily conceptual. Xiong Yuezhi points out that less than 12% of the 482 new terms that he coined for his translations are still in use today.<sup>75</sup> Many of Yan's neologisms were based on classical terms, which he considered conceptually 'similar', but which were thus less accessible to the mass and the newer generations without a classical education.<sup>76</sup> They were

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Shanghai school once asked them to write on the subject 'natural selection and survival of the fittest'. He considered this modish, even though they were too young to comprehend adequately Huxley's sophisticated thought and scientific contribution. He also said that he read Yan's translation of *On Liberty* at the time but found that to youngsters, Yan's archaic language was not as accessible and rousing as Liang Qichao. See Hu Shi 胡適, *Hu Shi Zizhuan* 胡適自傳 [Autobiography of Hu Shi] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe 江蘇文藝出版社, 1995), pp. 54-56.

<sup>73</sup> Lu Xun recalled he continued to read *Tianyanlun* even though one uncle did not allow him to do so and made him copy a conservative text that denounced Kang Youwei's reform programmes instead. He said he was struck by the exciting new ideas and knowledge contained in *Tianyanlun*, such as 'things compete', 'nature selects' and foreign figures like Socrates, Plato and the Stoics. See Lu Xun 魯迅, 'Suoji' 瑣記 [Fragmentary Collections], in *Zhaohua Xishi* 朝華夕拾 [Dawn Flowers Plucked at Dusk] (Beijing: Weimingshe 未名社, 1928), pp. 101-16 (pp. 112-13).

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Wang Kefei, *Fanyi Wenhua Shiluan*, p. 125; Niu Yangshan 牛仰山, *Jindai Wenxue Yu Lu Xun* 近代文學與魯迅 [Contemporary Literature and Lu Xun] (Guilin: Lijiang Chubanshe 漓江出版社, 1991), p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> See Xiong Yuezhi, pp. 700-01. In the 1931 Shangwu Yinshuguan series, the editors noted that Yan's translated terms, with a strong inclination to elegance, were mostly inaccessible and different from prevalent terms used at that time and thus, a glossary contrasting Yanian terminology and current terminology was appended after each translation to facilitate readers' understanding.

<sup>76</sup> Schwartz attributes this to the abandonment of classical Chinese as an instrument of translation, the

mostly replaced by terms used in Japanese translations of Western works, which employed ample Chinese characters themselves.<sup>77</sup>

Secondly, Yan's transposition of evolution into *jinhua* 進化 [progress, modify] in *Tianyanlun* was to set the 'default definition' of 'evolution' in Chinese, so that *jinhua* is still its most popular and straightforward interpretation, despite the availability of another more neutral translation, *yanhua* 演化 [develop, modify], in English-Chinese dictionaries.<sup>78</sup> Obviously to Yan, *tianyan* signifies both 'the cosmic process' and

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flocking of Chinese students to Japan and the flood of translations of Japanese translations. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 95.

<sup>77</sup> According to Chinese philologist Wang Li 王力 (1900-1986), most semantically translated terms in modern Chinese are originally Japanese translations. Although new terms were coined by early translators like Yan Fu to represent Western concepts, most of them were eventually replaced by Japanese translations because of the enormous influence of the Meiji Reformation on China and of an increasing number of students studying in Japan, as well as the fact that it is convenient to instill new meanings to Japanese translations which are in fact Chinese characters, since the Japanese writing code itself was invented in the eight century borrowing Middle Chinese characters for their phonetic value. Wang Li 王力, 'Hanyu Cihuishi' 漢語詞匯史 [History of Development of Chinese Lexicon], in *Wang Li Wenji* 王力文集 [Collected Essays of Wang Li], 20 vols. (Jinan: Shangdong Jiaoyu Chubanshe 山東教育出版社, 1990), XI, pp. 491-842 (pp. 695-99). See also Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Xiong Yuezhi 熊月之, *The Dissemination of Western Learning and the Late Qing Society* = 西學東漸與晚清社會 (Shanghai: Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, 1994), pp. 672-78.

<sup>78</sup> It is pointed out that the Chinese term *jinhua* first appeared in Japan in 1882 in *Jinken Shinsetsu* 人權新說 [New Explication on Human Right], a work by Kato Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 (1836-1916), which argues against inborn human right applying the notion of evolutionary elimination. Written in traditional Japanese containing a lot of Chinese characters, the work also contains Chinese terms such as *jingzheng* (contest) and *yousheng liebai* (the superior wins, the inferior loses). As Japan began massive introduction of Western thought with the Meiji Reforms since 1868, it is hardly surprising that Darwinism reached the island country before it reached China mainland. Actually Edward Morse already lectured on the Darwinian theory in English at the Tokyo University as early as 1878. See Wang Kefei, *Zhongri Jindai Dui Xifang Zhexue Sixiang De Shequ*, 1996, pp. 15-17, 50. It remains uncertain, however, whether Yan



‘evolution’, and implies *jinhua* or ‘evolutionary progress’. It is amazing that the only Chinese translation that came out seventy-five years later, *Jinhualun Yu Lunlixue* 進化論與倫理學 [On Progressive Evolution and Ethics], which deliberately differentiates itself from Yan’s ‘free translation in classical Chinese, with lots of his own opinions’, should retain his lop-sided default *jinhua* instead of the more neutral term *yanhua*.<sup>79</sup>

The notion of ‘progress’ is associated with some kind of social Darwinian determinism, though his teleology rests upon the rise of the Chinese race rather than superiority of the white. His new coordinate represents progressive transition to a new world necessitating a modern *dao*. It is worth mentioning that Yan Fu was not the first to introduce the evolutionary theory to China, but his insightful and eloquent critique on the subject in his translation has succeeded in creating the most significant impact.<sup>80</sup>

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Fu coined his own terms in Chinese or borrowed the Chinese terms from Japanese translations, for he mainly worked with English references and Chinese classics, unlike Liang Qichao and the younger generation who consulted plenty of Japanese translations. Moreover, although Yan began translating in 1894-95, he first read about the evolutionary theory from Spencer’s work in 1881-82.

<sup>79</sup> T. H. Huxley, *Jinhualun Yu Lunlixue* 進化論與倫理學 [Evolution and Ethics], trans. by translation team of *Jinhualun Yu Lunlixue* (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe 科學出版社, 1971). It is stated in the publisher’s note that the new translation serves as a ‘reference’ to readers ‘based on Chairman Mao’s teaching that “what comes from the past can be useful in the present, so does that from the West in the East”.’

<sup>80</sup> British Consul Rutherford Alcock (1809-97) wrote in Shanghai in 1855, four years before the *Origin of Species*, about the prevalence of stronger nations over weaker nations. John King Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 173; quoted in Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, pp. 3-4. It is noted that the notion of history as a unilinear development itself was already made available, though not widely popular, in China in the 1870s by Christian missionaries, the *Globe Magazine* 萬國公報, and Jiangnan Arsenal. See Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis*, pp. 52-62; Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, pp. 15-21; Wang Kefei, *Zhongri Jindai Dui Xifang Zhexue Sixiang De Shequ*, pp. 17-18. Pusey adds that Kang’s three-age theory might have come under the influence of Liao Ping 廖平 or Edward Bellany’s *Looking Backward*. Wang suggests that elementary principles of evolutionary change by Lamarck and Darwin were first introduced to China in 1871 in the translation of Charles Lyell’s *Elements of Geology* by Hua Hengfang 華衡芳

Thirdly, Yan's introduction of social Darwinist assertions to China influenced his contemporaries, most notably Kang Youwei and his student Liang Qichao.

Undoubtedly Yan has not received as much attention from later historians as the accessible Liang or reform heavyweight Kang, but it is evident that both have drawn from his translations, especially *Tianyanlun*. Already in 1896, after reading the manuscript of *Tianyanlun*, Liang stated that he drew heavily on Yan's social Darwinian discourse, together with his master's New Text School historicism and ideal conception of 'Great Harmony' and Tan Sitong's exposition on humanity.<sup>81</sup> In a letter to Yan in the following spring, he revealed that Kang Youwei commended the translator as 'extraordinary', while he himself was thrilled by his ideas and writing, which was 'as precious as gold and jade', remarking that he felt the most affection and stimulation from Yan after his own master.<sup>82</sup> Kang's first crude thoughts on unilinear progress in

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(1833-1902) and D. J. Macgowan 瑪高濶. Pusey remarks that at about the same time that Yan released *Tianyanlun*, Timothy Richard 李提摩太 released in 1894 *Taixi Xinshi Lanyao* 泰西新史攬要 [A Gist of Recent Western History], an adaptation based on *The Nineteenth Century: a History* by Robert Mackenzie 馬懇西 (1823-1881). The work contains a strong tone of progress, touching upon major historical incidents that led to a free and exciting intellectual and political environment in Europe and Adam Smith's eco-political principles. Pusey, *ibid*, pp. 5, 45-47. See also Xiong Yuezhi, p. 690. Although the book sold nearly one million copies in a fortnight with official help, its influence had not been as long lasting as *Tianyanlun*. Statistics from Jerome Ch'en, *China and the West: Society and Culture 1815-1937* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), p. 69.

<sup>81</sup> Liang Qichao, 'Shuo Qun Xu' 說群序 [Preface to 'On the People'], 1896, in *Liang Qichao Quanjì* 梁啟超全集 [Complete Works of Liang Qichao], 10 vols. (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe 北京出版社, 1999), I, p. 93.

<sup>82</sup> Liang Qichao, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu'. Jiang Guangxue suggests that Yan's emphasis on Western learning caused Liang to distance himself further from Kang Youwei's teleological reinterpretation of Modern Text classics and his insistence on traditional scholarship. See Jiang Guangxue 蔣廣學, et al., *Liang Qichao He Zhongguo Gudai Xueshu De Zhongjie* 梁啟超和中國古代學術的終結 [Liang Qichao and the End of Classical Chinese Scholarship] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe 江蘇教育出版社, 1998),



the 1890s undoubtedly came from New Text School historicism. But his final conceptualization that came out two decades later clearly contains *Tiānyānlùn* rhetoric, though his reception of social Darwinism is dialectic, based on his firmer allegiance to traditional Chinese learning.<sup>83</sup> Liang Qichao's syncretic thinking and his accessible writing were quite promiscuous, not always acknowledging his sources (a trait also shared by his master and many others), although his engagement in an evolutionary discourse is evident, a fact that he frankly admitted in his letters and essays.<sup>84</sup> Liang's

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pp. 1-19.

<sup>83</sup> Kang's *On Great Harmony* features his vision of futuristic utopianism characterized by moral-social progress combined with techno-economic advancement. The excerpt below shows the influence of Yanian discourse:

Nowadays the theory of *tiānyān* is being proclaimed, and the idea of competition being regarded as most rational. Hence states marshal their troops to fight each other, considering it a matter of course to swallow up another state. Men try to deceive and entrap each other, considering trickery and abuse to be the accomplishment of their plans. The hundred affairs, the myriad businesses are all founded upon competition. It is thought that talent and intellect progress through competition, that instruments and skills are refined through competition and that it is a law of nature for the superior to win and the inferior to lose. And in making a living in commerce, still more is competition considered the great principle. How can it be, that only by depraving his thinking and toppling his family can man learn how to fulfil the *dao* of heaven and to complement nature!...

Recent critiques hate the calm of unity and exalt the hubbub of competition. They think that with competition, there is progress and without strife, there is retrogression. This is truly suitable to the Age of Disorder, but most pernicious to the *Dao* of Great Harmony and Universal Peace.

Winberg Chai, *The Political Thought of K'ang Yu-wei*, pp. 59-60; my ellipsis. See also pp. 54-78.

Source text taken from Kang Youwei, *Datong Shu*, pp. 284-85.

<sup>84</sup> One marked example of Liang refuting his former self and his obsession with the evolutionary notion of 'progress' can be seen in the following essay, where Liang takes back his former iconoclastic attack on Confucianism and defends it instead as the state ideology:

This piece contains exactly the opposite of what I stated several years ago, which is like attacking myself with my own spear. I dare not remain silent of the fact that I am correct today but wrong yesterday. Does this signify progress in thinking or rather, retrogression? I should leave this to the judgment of the readers according to whether they are progressing or advancing in thinking. So speaks the writer.



thinking did not mature until his exile to Japan in late 1898, when he was fascinated by Yan's translations and a host of Japanese translations of Western works; his subsequent works portray the same tendency as Yan to hybridity, frequently expanding on subject matters that Yan had earlier introduced.<sup>85</sup> Hao Chang notes that Liang's writing is saturated with Darwinian concepts, images and metaphors, and his view of *qun* as a cosmic and social trend towards group integration and cohesion is influenced by Yan.<sup>86</sup> Based on Yan's conception of a new society, *qun*, whose individual selves display

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Liang Qichao, 'Baojiao Fei Suoyi Zun Kong Lun' 保教非所以尊孔論 [Conserving the Faith Does Not Equal Worshipping Confucius], 1902, in *Liang Qichao Quanjì*, II, pp. 765-770 (p. 765); my translation.

In the 1902 preface of his anthology, the author admitted that his occasional arguments were merely based on those of his friends, mentors, Western philosophers, with numerous twists and turns over the past years. Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi Wenji* 飲冰室文集 [Collected Essays of the Ice-drinker's Studio], 16 vols. (Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1960; first publ. 1915).

<sup>85</sup> A lot of Liang's critiques touched upon foreign ideas and figures that Yan had introduced and are steeped in typical Yanian discourse, such as 'the superior beat the inferior', 'competition is the mother of evolution' and 'unity of the group'. Such articles include: 'Ziyou Shu' 自由書 [On Liberty] (1899-1903), 'Jinshi Diyi Dazhe Kant Zhi Xueshuo' 近世第一大哲康德之學說 [The Teachings of Top Modern Philosopher Kant] (1903), 'Wushinian Zhongguo Jinhua Gailun' 五十年中國進化概論 [Brief Discussion on China's Evolutionary Progress in Fifty Years] (1923). The following were published in 1902: 'Lun Zhengfu Yu Remin Zhi Quanxian' 論政府與人民之權限 [On the Distinction of Rights between the Government and the People], 'Lun Minzu Jingzheng Zhi Dashi' 論民族競爭之大勢 [On the Main Trends of Racial Competition], 'Jinhualun Gemingzhe Kidd Zhi Xueshuo' 進化論革命者頡德之學說 [Teachings of Progressive Evolution Revolutionary Benjamin Kidd], 'Tianyanxue Chuzu Darwin Zhi Xueshuo Ji Qi Luezhuan' 天演學初祖達爾文之學說及其略傳 [Teachings and Brief Biography of the Founder of the Evolutionary Theory: Darwin], 'Gezhixue Yange Kaolue' 格致學沿革考略 [A Brief Introduction on the Development of Science], 'Falixue Dajia Montesquieu Zhi Xueshuo' 法理學大家孟德斯鳩之學說 [Teachings of Jurisprudence Master Montesquieu], 'Lun Xila Gudai Xueshu' 論希臘古代學術 [On Ancient Greek Learning], 'Aristotle Zhi Zhengzhi Xueshuo' 亞里士多德之政治學說 [Political Teachings of Aristotle], 'Lelizhuyi Taidou Bentham Zhi Xueshuo' 樂利主義泰斗邊沁之學說 [Teachings of Utilitarian Master Jeremy Bentham], 'Jinshi Wenming Chuzu Er Dajia Zhi Xueshuo' 近世文明初祖二大家之學說 [Teachings of the Two Pioneers of Modern Civilization: Bacon and Descartes]. See *Liang Qichao Quanjì*, especially I, 93 -95; II, 655-735, 881-1076.



strong energy, intellect and morality in their struggle for survival and territorial integrity, Liang formulated a collectivistic and nationalistic state in which its modern citizens, the 'new people', would unite in competition with other states.<sup>87</sup>

Consequently, just as Yan manipulated Darwin, Huxley and Spencer in *Tianyanlun*, so reformers and revolutionaries, Republicans and Communists alike, did the same to Yanian evolutionary discourse, which tided in with the desperate need for change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Pusey even suggests that while Yan is 'the great introducer of Darwin and perhaps, in the end, China's greatest Social Darwinist', Kang is 'both China's first prophet of progress and her first great Anti-Darwinist' and Liang 'the great apostle, almost a Chinese Huxley, and also, all aspersions as to the depth of his own thought to the contrary, the great complexifier'.<sup>88</sup> Interestingly the amalgamation of 'their' Darwinian discourses implanted in the student generation, freshly released from the straitjacket of classical education (thanks to Kang's educational reforms), a new social-political construction the default definition of which are 'change', 'progress' and things 'new'. From Darwin's changing cosmos, Yan's new evolutionary *dao*, Kang's society in progress to Liang's renovated people, we can trace a progression in operation, again a consequence of Chinese assimilative dialectics and presumptive discourse. The self-assertive quest for evolutionary change was later converted into theoretical justification for revolution, traceable in many writings after 1898. One obvious example is *The Revolutionary Army*, in which Yan's household

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<sup>86</sup> Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>87</sup> Liang Qichao, 'Xinmin Shuo' 新民說 [On the New People], in *Liang Qichao Quanjì*, II, pp. 655-735. It must be pointed out *xin* can mean 'new' as an adjective or 'to renovate' as a verb. Accordingly, Liang's *xinmin* 新民 can mean 'a new people', 'a renovated people' or 'to renovate the people', where renovation also applies to the people's physical strength, intellect and morality.

term *tianyan* is converted into a cosmic justification for revolution.<sup>89</sup>

The same progression from change to renovation is also seen in the moral-political tenets of Republican leader Sun Yat-sen. Jerome Ch'en suggests that both Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-sen were affected by the belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority and Han inferiority instilled by Yan's informative and polemical works.<sup>90</sup> But it must be pointed out that Sun developed his own version of the evolutionary theory not under Yan's direct influence, since he is thought to be among the first Chinese to read Darwin in China when studying medicine in Hong Kong from 1887 to 1892 (Yan read about Darwin in the late 1870s in Britain) and masterminded his revolutionary campaign overseas.<sup>91</sup> Conceivably Yan's Darwinian discourse became a generative seedbed for intellectual leaders to cast 'reformation-renovation-revolution' as the necessary formula of change for a better future. Yan's prioritizing the strong nation over the

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<sup>88</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, p. 7.

<sup>89</sup> The first chapter of the influential revolutionary tract, soaked in Yanian discourse, begins as such: Revolution is the universal principle of evolution. Revolution is a universal principle of the world. Revolution is the essence of the struggle for survival or destruction in a time of transition. Revolution submits to heaven and responds to men's needs. Revolution rejects what is corrupt and keeps the good. Revolution is the advance from barbarism to civilization. Evolution turns slaves into masters...there is none which had not undergone weeding out by the process of evolution, and in the course of time appears as it is now. Since this is the case, revolution is an everyday thing...I am glad that they [my fellow countrymen] have been able to obtain translations of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, Mill's essay *On Liberty*, the History of the French Revolution, the American Declaration of Independence and such like works and to read them. Zou Rong 鄒容, *The Revolutionary Army: A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903* = 革命軍, trans. by John Lust (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1968), pp. 58-60; my ellipses.

<sup>90</sup> Jerome Ch'en, *China and the West*, pp. 69, 89.

<sup>91</sup> According to Sun's former classmate, his favorite books in his university days were on the French Revolution and Darwinism. Since there were no translations available then, Sun should have read them in English. See Luo Xianglin 羅香林, *Guofu Zhi Daxue Shidai* 國父之大學時代 [The University Days



assertive self is reflected in Sun's 'Three People's Principles' 三民主義, namely, nationalism 民族, people's livelihood 民生 and democracy 民權, the latter two being equivalent to socialism and republicanism. Micheal Gasster notes that Sun and many of his supporters, students from an upper-class background, valued strong leadership over populism.<sup>92</sup> Thus Yan Fu was not alone with his elitist streak. Sun's concept of evolution specifies a kind of tripartite unilinear historicism where civilization would progress in three stages, first of material, then of species and last of human, sharing the same teleological aspiration of Kang Youwei and attributing his political motto also to the Confucian classical text 'Evolution of Rites': 'All under heaven is for the people' 天下爲公.<sup>93</sup> The collectivistic conception of *gong* caters to the same concern as addressed by Yan Fu's manipulation of private wants for public ends.<sup>94</sup>

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of Sun Yat-sen] (Taipei: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1954), pp. 28-32, 88.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Gasster, 'The republican revolutionary movement', in *The Cambridge History of China*, XI, ed. by John King Fairbank and Liu Kwang-ching (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 463-534 (pp. 492-93).

<sup>93</sup> See Fung Yu-lan 馮友蘭, *Zhongguo Xiandai Zhhexueshi* 中國現代哲學史 [History of Modern Chinese Philosophy] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1992), pp. 42-43.

<sup>94</sup> Confucius' conception of the 'Great Harmony' as stated in the 'Datong' Chapter 大同章 in the 'Liyun' Section 禮運篇 [Movement of Rites] of the *Book of Rites* runs as follow:

When the Great *Dao* prevails, all under heaven is for the people. Appointment is based on virtue and ability; there is mutual trust and fraternity. Hence, men do not regard as parents only their own parents, nor do they treat as children only their own children. Provision is secured for the aged till death, employment for the able-bodied, nurture for the young, as well as care for widows, widowers, orphans, the single, the disabled and the sick. Men have their respective occupations and women their homes. People despise laying commodities idle on the ground, yet they do not keep them for their own. They detest indolence, yet they do not use their energies for their own. In this way, selfish scheming does not grow; robbers, thieves and rebels no longer exist; there is no need to shut the outer door. This is called Great Harmony.

Li Xueqin 李學勤 (ed.), *Liji Zhengyi* 禮記正義 [The Correct Meaning of the *Book of Rites*], 3 vols.

Hao Chang suggests that the kind of 'Chinese' democracy that Liang and Sun conceived was rationalized as an indispensable functioning part of a modern nationalistic state rather than as an institution to protect individual rights and liberties, so that the individual's immanent tendency toward the cult of the state should prevail over liberal values when the Communists seized power.<sup>95</sup> Mao Zedong acknowledged the early influence of Kang and Liang in his autobiography, sharing the social-moral vision of Great Harmony, which he conceived as Communism, as well as the typical Chinese social-political concern of seeking progress through self-cultivation, struggle between groups and the study of science, which he interpreted as self-criticism, class struggle and Marxism as a science of history respectively.<sup>96</sup> This manifests the influence of Yan Fu, if we remember Schwartz's similar view and Mao's paying tribute to both Kang and Yan as among the four leading figures to seek truth from the West before the birth of the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>97</sup>

Kenneth Hsu suggests, not without regret, that the conceptual progression of 'struggle between groups', 'unity' to 'social evolutionary progress' by Yan, Kang and Liang respectively had a bearing on Mao (who took revolution for evolution and who believed in the material evolutionary course of feudalism – republicanism – socialism – communism, with class struggle being the key to world progress) and laid the seeds for

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(Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe (北京大學出版社), 1999), II. pp. 658-59; my translation.

<sup>95</sup> Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907*, p. 305-06. Pusey remarks that Marx first struck Chinese Communists as their great social Darwinist, who was to replace Darwin after the revolution. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, pp. 444-48. P

<sup>96</sup> Winberg Chai, pp. 195-210.

<sup>97</sup> Winberg Chai notes Mao's failure to give credit to neo-Confucian idealist Wang Yangming for his instructions on self-cultivation and on the relationship between conduct, action and knowledge, because 'perhaps in his desire to dissociate his ideology from the past, he finds it necessary not to acknowledge



the reception of Communism in China.<sup>98</sup> The concept of revolution, based on Marxism-Leninism as Mao put it, was recast as rebellion, which became the natural law in the new Communist order and which, as Pusey sees it, was taught by Sun Yat-sen and Liang Qichao, not Marx.<sup>99</sup> Starting from Mao, the Yanian struggle between groups and races, an adaptation of the Darwinian struggle between different species, was turned into the struggle between classes. It is not hard to see the highly regenerative Yanian discourse at work.

‘Did Darwin really change men’s minds, or was he changed to fit men’s minds?’<sup>100</sup>

Both appear probable. Critiquing Huxley, Yan Fu’s translation constructed for Chinese readers a socialized evolutionary reality that is conceivably more complicated than the kind of Sinicized synthesis suggested by Pusey.<sup>101</sup> Pusey opines that Darwinism helped to inspire a true renaissance of Chinese thought by specifically challenging certain traditional ideas and by discrediting all ancient authority, so that all the great questions of philosophy were rethought in the subsequent two decades, resembling the great

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any indebtedness to Confucianism.’ Ibid, pp. 200-02.

<sup>98</sup> See ‘Preface to the Chinese Edition’, in Kenneth J. Hsu, *The Great Dying: Cosmic Catastrophe, Dinosaurs and the Theory of Evolution* = 大滅絕 – 尋求一個消失的年代, trans. by Ren Ke 任克 (Taipei: Tianxia Wenhua 天下文化, 1992), pp. i-ix.

<sup>99</sup> Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, p. 450.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted from *ibid*, p. 457.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, pp. 456-57. Pusey claims that Darwin has been Sinicized in all directions, interacting with Daoism, Confucianism, Legalism and even Buddhism. Taoist Darwinism borrows the idea of a naturalistic *dao* evolving with mechanistic change regardless of the question of morality. Confucian Darwinism socializes the new *dao* by preserving a place for human action, self-cultivation and human perfection for self-strengthening and national building. Legalist Darwinism supports the dictatorship of the fittest and the establishment of social and legal institutions that are conducive to orderly governance. Buddhist Darwinism reminds us of *karma*, enigmatic accountability of human conduct, and of human frailty.

period of the Classical Age.<sup>102</sup> The credit should go first and foremost to Yan Fu. After the so-called hundred schools of thought had contended during the Classical Age, political selection of Confucianism as the state ideology in the ensuing Han Dynasty marginalized all other schools that were considered uncondusive to governance, though many useful tenets were assimilated into institutional Confucianism and into Daoism, which survived and developed in response to people's metaphysical wants. In Medieval China, incoming Buddhism prospered on Chinese soil in the struggle for survival and the three ideologies were blended. In late Qing, the survival of this self-contained ecosystem was suddenly threatened by intruding races, the impact too great to be gauged by indigenous coordinates or reconciled by mere Sinicization of alien coordinates. It was Yan Fu who first succeeded, at the cultural, philosophical and cosmological levels, to mediate across the differences of markedly different conceptual grids and produce a translational discourse that addressed China's needs and enabled his countrymen to rethink past propositions and gauge new ones.

Language is not necessarily universal. The polarity of languages, of their immanent textual and specifically conceptual grids renders 'absolute' understanding improbable. Each language is a view of the world, and each civilization a world in its own.<sup>103</sup>

*Tianyanlun* overcame the barrier between the conceptual grids of one literate culture and another, though it also revealed them more fully, producing a hybridized discourse seeding regenerative coordinates in the Chinese conceptual grid with lasting influence on contemporary Chinese writing their own modernity. It is not primarily a text being

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 449.

<sup>103</sup> Octavio Paz, 'Translation: Literature and Letters', trans. by Irene del Corral, in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet



transferred, but a discussion of a cosmological issue with a source text as a point of departure. Seeing translation as intellectual critique, a tool of higher learning, system regeneration and power conversion, any claim to the 'absolute' desirability and feasibility of 'faithfulness' to a text falls into the warp of an idealized vacuum. Through this metaphor of intellectual critique, we become aware that our neighbours do not speak and think as we do, as Octavio Paz puts it. 'On the one hand, the world is presented to us as a collection of similarities; on the other, as a growing heap of texts, each slightly different from the one that came before it: translations of translations of translations.'<sup>104</sup>

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(Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.152-62 (p. 153).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 154.

## Chapter 4

### Translation as Narrative: Cross-cultural Transmission via Confucian Poetics

The perspective of history enables us to see more clearly what events and what sorts of activities have permanent importance...Men are born and die; some leave hardly a trace, others transmit something of good or evil to future ages. The man whose thoughts and feelings are enlarged by history will wish to be a transmitter, and to transmit, so far as may be, what his successors will judge to have been good.<sup>1</sup>

It has been argued in the last two chapters that translation functioned as intellectual critique for Yan Fu in his efforts to reform the *dao* and that his primary concern was more intellectual than utilitarian. Dialectically speaking, while we see Yan Fu as a reformer trying to resuscitate primordial indigenous values and enculturate Western systems, we can also see him as a discriminate transmitter of ancient wisdom and human civilization in search of the *dao*. His predecessors had done the same, but their reference grids were essentially Chinese and Confucian. Confucians believed that ever since the ancient sage-kings (who lived in harmony with the *dao* and manifested the *dao* through virtuous deeds) were gone, it was their responsibility to transmit the *dao* through positive human endeavour.<sup>2</sup> *The Great Learning* teaches them to achieve this through learning, through cultivation of the person, which begins with the investigation of things for the extension of knowledge to achieve a sincere mind and a

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<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell, 'How to Read and Understand History', in *Understanding History and Other Essays* (New York: Philosophic Library, 1957), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> One Confucian maxim is: The highest endeavour is to accomplish virtuous deed, then political feat, and then significant speech (太上立德，其次立功，其次立言). See Hu Zhihui (trans.), *Zuo's Commentary* = 左傳 (Changsha: Hubei Renmin Chubanshe 湖北人民出版社, 1996), pp. 852-53. To Confucius, ancient sage-kings were the paragon of the perfect gentleman since they united the nation by righteous rule and saintly deeds. The Confucian master considered himself a humble teacher upholding the cause of the ancient kings.



rectified heart.<sup>3</sup> *The Doctrine of the Mean* teaches them to pursue and regulate the *dao* by acting in accordance with the 'nature' that heaven has conferred and by letting their stirred feelings to act in their own due degree in a state of 'harmony'.<sup>4</sup> These two Confucian classics remained a major inspiration for Yan Fu in his pursuit of the highest learning, and it was why he should be so attracted to Spencer. Spencer's synthetic philosophy of studying myriad things under one cardinal principle struck him as similar to, as well as being a modern Western scientific extension of the *dao* exemplified in these two classics.<sup>5</sup> For Yan Fu, the ultimate end of social and cosmic harmony remained essentially Confucian, but his existential situation impinged upon him to seek his way out on a broader horizon, on a cross-cultural platform for the mediation of world philosophies.

Wu Chan-liang, in his study of Yan Fu's first extended translation, shares a similar view. He argues that Yan Fu's primary goal of producing *Tianyanlun* was to illustrate the *dao* of the cosmic process and social evolution by integrating the best of both Chinese and Western thinking in order to point out the way for Chinese culture in an age of crises; he stresses that this goal and mode of thinking is immanently Chinese,

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<sup>3</sup> James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese/English Four Books* = 漢英四書 (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1992), pp. 2-5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 24-27.

<sup>5</sup> This is clearly stated in Yan's 1895 political critique 'Yuan Qiang' and his preface and postscript on translation of his translation of *The Study of Sociology*. In the latter contexts, Yan clearly remarks that Spencer struck a balance between new and old learning and helped him mend his past biases. He also praises that *The Study of Sociology* is the quintessence of Western learning, indispensable for enlightenment and its worth is not limited to sociology. This shows that Yan saw translation primarily as a scholarly pursuit, a self-cultivation exercise. Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunxue Siyan* 群學肆言 [On the Study of the Group] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1903), pp. 3-9.

even though Yan seemingly based his critique on the premise of modern science.<sup>6</sup> Wu remarks that Huxley's two-pronged work – examining current evolutionary tenets in the prolegomena and discussing related philosophical and religious traditions all over the world in the main text – constitutes a body of thought in itself, upon which Yan Fu fused his own views and traditional evolutionary tenets based mainly on Daoism and the *Classic of Changes*.<sup>7</sup> He thinks Yan Fu's concerns were more of a scholarly and metaphysical nature than a utilitarian nature, and with its extraordinary extent of cross-cultural mediation, *Tianyanlun* represents Yan Fu's tour de force, a fusion of Chinese and Western thinking and philosophy at the highest level, and in no way should be treated as an ordinary translation.<sup>8</sup> He also suggests that Yan's attempt at manifestation of the *dao* probably touched the ultimate concern of Chinese intellectuals and it was this concern, rather than its suitability for reform or enlightenment, that became the main reason for *Tianyanlun*'s overwhelming immediate success.<sup>9</sup>

To many people, an 'ordinary' translation is probably one that is faithful to its source. This is simply one of the possible goals of translation, not necessarily good or bad, as I have argued that translation is only a tool to various ends, and the issue of what constitutes faith is highly problematic. It is not surprising that critics should interpret *xin* literally as faithfulness (to a source text or author) and hold it as a standard of translation, since Yan Fu proposed *xin* as a primary difficulty and guideline for

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<sup>6</sup> Wu Zhanliang 吳展良, 'A New Interpretation of the Intention and Connotation of Yen Fu's On Evolution' = 嚴復“天演論”作意與內涵新詮, *Historical Enquiry* = 臺大歷史學報, 24 (1999), 103-76.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 142.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp. 157-58.



translation and confessed apologetically that he developed freely upon Huxley's themes instead of following the 'standard' method of translating.<sup>10</sup> But it must be noted that Yan briefly explained *xin-da-ya* only in *Tianyanlun* and did not provide translational notes for all his works (his notes are basically steeped in Confucian poetics). It is true that none of his translations can compare to the extent of rewriting present in *Tianyanlun*, probably because its cosmological subject matter dovetailed most with Yan's prime concerns. As the other works were meant for consolidating the indigenous system on epistemology and methodology, concerning areas that only had rudimentary development in China (or the seeds of which remained latent in primordial values), the overall chapter organization is preserved in the translations, with added commentaries and marginal notes serving as summary.

Yet Yan also stated in various translations (in the preface or translational notes of *Evolution and Ethics*, *The Wealth of Nations*, *On Liberty*, *A Study of Sociology* and *Primer of Logic*) that his source text only served as a point of reference for cross-cultural studies on a particular subject and mending the misunderstanding of xenophobic and radical parties. Even when he specified that his second translation *Yuanfu* was 'unlike *Tianyanlun*', that he 'did not add or alter anything in terms of meaning, despite the need to cater to the overall flow of the whole text', he added that he fused in the views of other scholars and his own for cross reference, apart from chapter-end and in-text commentaries.<sup>11</sup> Traces of expansion, omission, abridgement

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp. 20-21.

<sup>10</sup> See Yan Fu, 'Tianyanlun Yi Liyan' 天演論譯例言 [General Remarks on Translation of *Tianyanlun*], 10 June 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji* 嚴復集 [Works of Yan Fu], ed. by Wang Shi 王栻, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986), V, pp. 1321-23.

<sup>11</sup> See 'Notes on Translation' in Yan Fu (trans.), *Yuanfu* 原富 [Whence Wealth], 2 vols. (Taipei:

and reordering abound throughout *Yuanfu*.<sup>12</sup> Commentaries and deviation from the source text are also common in other translations.<sup>13</sup> In the translation of *On Liberty*,

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Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1901-1902), I, pp. 7-15 (p. 14). It is estimated that there are three hundred commentary entries totalling eighty thousand words in *Yuanfu*. See Pi Houfeng 皮後鋒, 'The Translation and Dissemination of *The Wealth of Nations* in Modern China' = "原富"的翻譯與傳播, *Chinese Studies* = 漢學研究, 18:1 (2000.06), 309-30.

<sup>12</sup> Near the beginning of Chapter II, Book I, for instance, the translator adds an evolutionary perspective to Smith's discussion on the division of labour, 'Thus exchange happens in every country, and its efficiency and complexity vary according to the evolutionary advancement of the country.' He substitutes Smith's 'human wisdom' with the Confucian-oriented term 'sage'. After a few sentences, he also adds, 'Birds do not exchange worms, nor do apes fruits, for the prerequisite of exchange is individual differences, which is absent for animals.' Yan Fu, *ibid*, p. 38. Another example is in chapter III, Book I, where Smith remarks that 'neither the ancient Egyptians, nor the Indians, nor the Chinese, encouraged foreign commerce, but seem all to have derived their great opulence from his inland navigation.' Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations Books I-III* (London: Penguin, 1997; first publ. 1776), p. 125. But Yan's translation shifts the focus and appears empathetic: 'The three ancient kingdoms of Egypt, India and China banned sea trade to forestall foreign exploitation of their already sufficient inland trade. All three, however, have fallen from their ancient glories.' Yan Fu, *ibid*, p. 44; my translation.

<sup>13</sup> In the translation of *The Study of Sociology*, for instance, there are marginal section gists throughout the text and one commentary plus one note. In Chapter I, Yan magnifies the issue by translating the heading 'Our Need of It' into 'Bianyu' 貶愚 [Condemning Foolishness] and adds the following after Spencer's narration of the common phenomenon of the people criticizing the government: 'Upon hearing this, somebody asks: This is nothing strange at all. How can the man in the field, with no education and no other everyday concern except food and labour, have any vision?' Yan Fu, *Qunxue Siyan*, p. 11; my translation. In the translation of *The Spirit of Laws*, there are altogether three hundred and thirty commentaries. In the beginning of Book I, Yan reiterates the necessity of laws by adding, 'There is nothing on earth that does not have its laws; things emerge and laws form therewith.' He renders the 'relation' of laws to different beings using the more concrete term *lunji* 倫脊, *lun* referring to the moral relationships under the Confucian function-role hierarchy and *ji* the ridge or backbone of things, and expands Montesquieu's statement: 'They who assert that a blind fatality produced the various effects we behold in this world talk very absurdly'. Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. by Thomas Nugent (New York: Hafner Press, 1949; first publ. 1734), p. 1. He rewrites the latter part into a hypothetical monologue typical of the conventional Chinese textual grid: 'A believer of chance says, "Everything in the universe arises involuntarily. Things we see are formed blindly,



Yan mentioned that reordering of source text materials was the 'standard rule' of translating Western works due to grammatical differences and difficulty of the source text.<sup>14</sup> But his adjustments are apparently more than mere syntactic reordering. In his last extended translation, that of *Primer of Logic*, he accounted for the profusion of substitution and Chinese allusion in his work:

In writing, I am only after metaphorical explication. Whether it adheres to the original text or not is not my concern. Should my friends ridicule me for merely engaging in translation picking up the words of others instead of original composition and thus not being capable of self accomplishment, my humble self will just grin and bear it.<sup>15</sup>

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meeting by chance, following no volition but bearing various fruits." This person does not know this is absurd talk.' Yan Fu trans.), *Fayi* 法意 [The Meaning of Laws], 2 vols. (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1904-1909), I, p. 7; my translation. As for the translation of *A History of Politics*, Yan adds sixteen commentaries and one hundred and two embedded notes in his text. Near the beginning, he replaces Jenks' examples of 'states', Germany and Spain, by the Asian examples Korea and India. Yan Fu (trans.), *Shehui Tongquan* 社會通詮 [Exposition on Society] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1904), p. 2. In his translation of *A System of Logic*, he adds forty-two commentary entries, though there are no preface or translational notes. Expansion appears to be more common than abstraction in this translation. For instance, in section 2 in the Introduction, Yan adds the following description about Archbishop Whatley in his text:

In recent centuries, the development of science has broken new grounds in Europe but the study of logic remains almost stagnant and pedantic, a cause of criticism for scholars. Only Whatley has achieved more than others and his works become prevalent and significant.

Yan Fu (trans.), *Mill Mingxue* 穆勒名學 [Mill's Study of Logic] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1905), p. 4; my translation.

<sup>14</sup> See 'Notes on Translation' in Yan Fu (trans.), *Qunji Quanjielun* 群己群界論 [On the Distinction of Rights between Group and Self] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1903), pp. 1-5 (p. 3). Apart from marginal section gists throughout the text, Yan adds, for instance, an emphatic exclamation on the despotism of custom in the East in Chapter 3: 'Its legal and penal matters follow the custom, so do trade, courtship and worship, as well as earthly and funeral rites. Custom? Custom? Is it supreme as despotism?' Ibid, p. 111; my translation.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from 'Translator's Preface' to Yan Fu (trans.), *Mingxue Qianshuo* 名學淺說 [Elementary

This reveals Yan Fu's consistent attitude toward translation. To him, translation was original composition, self accomplishment, system regeneration, power conversion, a metaphor. Any seeming claim to faithfulness to the source text by Yan Fu should not be taken at face value, for it must be stressed that Yan's tripartite *xin-da-ya* translation principles, proposed in his 'General Remarks on Translation', did not appear before *Tianyanlun* went to print in 1898.<sup>16</sup> It remains doubtful whether he already had the three principles in mind when he finished his first drafts or whether he consciously formulated *xin, da, ya* as meaning faithfulness to the source, fluency of expression and elegance in style. Addition, deletion, summarizing, paraphrasing and substitution are common in all translations, so it would be wrong to say that any of his translations are 'literal'; in fact it would be pointless to map his translations on the scale of literiness to any useful purpose, given his unique philosophy of translation. In other translations, Yan Fu followed the overall chapter organization of the source texts,

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Study of Logic] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998; first publ. 1909), p. vii; my translation. There are only two commentaries in the entire free translation.

<sup>16</sup> The earliest versions available of *Tianyanlun* are an unauthorized edition by Weijing Press of Shaanxi Province 陝西味經售票處 in 1895 and Yan Fu's manuscript around 1896, both containing considerably more in-text rewriting than later versions. The most widely-used edition is probably the 1898 woodblock print by Lu's studio in Mianyang County, Hubei Province 湖北沔陽盧氏慎始基齋, which forms the basis of later popular editions such as the Commercial Press' *Famous Translations by Yan Fu* series 嚴譯名著叢刊 in 1931 and 1981 and Wang Shi's version in his *Works of Yan Fu* series in 1986. Other versions include a lithographic print by the private studio Shiqi Jingshe in Tianjin City 天津嗜奇精舍 in 1898 and a lithographic print titled *Huxley Tianyanlun* by Fuwen Press 富文書局 in 1901. Besides, there are also an abridged edition by Wu Rulun and a newspaper serial version (mainly of the Prolegomena) under the title *Tianyanlun Xuanshu* 天演論懸疏 [Profound Commentaries on the Evolution of Nature] in Yan's journal *Compilation of National News* in 1896-1898. It is worthwhile to mention that Benjamin Schwartz's *In Search of Wealth and Power*, sometimes considered a definitive study of Yan's translations, is based on the 1931 Commercial Press



notwithstanding various adjustments and the addition of commentaries to elucidate his stances. In fact few of his translations follow the ‘standard’ method he proposed, although none can compare to the extent of rewriting present in *Tianyanlun*, probably because its cosmological subject matter dovetailed most with his prime concerns. As will be discussed further below, the concepts of *xin*, *da*, *ya* are closely tied to Confucian poetics and this preempts their modern literal interpretation.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that Yan and his editors were in fact ambivalent about the notion of ‘translating’. It is worthwhile to study how *Tianyanlun* was ‘presented’ to his contemporaries when he decided to put his work to print. On the front page of his manuscript around 1896, titled *Huxley Tianyanlun*, is printed the description ‘Yan Fu from Houguan County tells (*xue*) 學’ – the intransitive verb *xue* means to learn, study or imitate.<sup>17</sup> The *Compilation of National News* issue in 1897 states that *Tianyanlun Xuanshu* is ‘expounded’ by Huxley from Britain and ‘recounted’ by Yan Fu – the verb after the subject Huxley is *zaolun* 造論 [lay down the arguments], and the verb after ‘Yan Fu from Houguan County’ is *fushu* 復述 [recount] in the contents column and *dazhi* 達旨 [convey the purport] at the beginning of the body of the text.<sup>18</sup> In the 1898 Shenshiji Studio edition of *Tianyanlun*, the verb used after Yan Fu is also *dazhi*.<sup>19</sup> As for the 1901 Fuwen Press edition of *Huxley Tianyanlun*, the verb after Yan is *shu* 述, which can mean to state,

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series.

<sup>17</sup> See illustration in Yan Fu, *Yan Fu Ji* 嚴復集 [Works of Yan Fu], ed. by Wang Shi 王栻, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986; first publ. 1957), V, p. 2. .

<sup>18</sup> See illustration in *ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> See illustration in Yan Fu (trans.), *Tianyanlun* 天演論 [On Evolution], in *Xuxiu Sikuquanshu* 續修四庫全書 [The Enlarged Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature], 1400 vols. (Shanghai:

relate, report or narrate.<sup>20</sup> As late as the 1915 and 1931 Shangwu Yinshuguan editions, Yan Fu is introduced as ‘the person who translates and narrates’ (*yishu zhe*) 譯述者.

It seems that the terms *shu*, *fushu*, *yishu* and *dazhi* are used interchangeably for ‘translating’. This phenomenon is not specific to *Tianyanlun*. Besides the 1931 Shangwu Yinshuguan Series of Yan Fu’s eight major translations, the 1930 edition of *Yuanfu (Wealth of Nations)*, the 1933 and 1926 editions of *Qunji Quanjie Lun (On Liberty)*, the 1915 and 1925 editions of *Mu-Le Mingxue (A System of Logic)* and the 1966 edition of *Mingxue Qianshuo (Primer of Logic)*, for instance, all specify that Yan *yishu* the source text by another author.<sup>21</sup> Other editions and the 1981 Shangwu Yinshuguan Series simply specify the verb *yi* on the title page. The use of the two terms *yi* and *yishu* appears to be arbitrary on the part of the publishers. Perhaps the editors’ foreword to the widely circulated 1981 series offers a hint to how ‘*yi*’ and ‘*yishu*’ tend to be perceived by the general reader. The editors say that in practice, Yan Fu’s translations mostly follow the ‘*yiyi*’ 意譯 [free translation] but not ‘*zhiyi*’ 直譯 [literal translation] approach and to a great extent, they can be considered his *zhushu* 著述 [narrative writing].<sup>22</sup> It is clear that Yan’s approach of recounting the arguments

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Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1995), Vol. 1297, pp. 1-30 (p.5).

<sup>20</sup> See illustration in Yan Fu, *Yan Fu Ji*, V, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> All these editions were released by Shanghai Commercial Press, except for the last one, which is published by Taipei Commercial Press. It is revealing to observe that *Mingxue Qianshuo*, a difficult work written in abstruse literary language, should be reprinted as late as 1966 in a series that, according to the series editor Wang Yunwu 王雲五, was intended as popular and affordable reading for the younger generation.

<sup>22</sup> See ‘Editors’ Foreword’ to Yan Fu, *Yan Yi Mingzhu Congkan* 嚴譯名著叢刊 [Famous Translation Series by Yan Fu] (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1981). The editors note that Yan often expressed his own opinions and deviated from the source, sometimes specifying this in commentaries but otherwise he would just combine translating and critique in the style of *yishu*. They also note that



of the source text has been widely perceived as free translation and his critique read as his own narrative writing.<sup>23</sup> If the distinction between *yi* and *yishu* matters at all, it seems that readers generally associated the former with literal translation and the latter free translation.<sup>24</sup> On the surface, the Chinese terms *yiyi* [lit. meaning; translation] and *zhiyi* [lit. straight; translation] seem to epitomize the same dichotomy between free and literal translation in Western translation history.<sup>25</sup>

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notwithstanding the availability of later translations in modern Chinese, Yan's translations are significant and irreplaceable.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Schwartz also observes that 'from the very outset', Yan 'makes no attempt at literal translation' and that 'almost all of his translations are paraphrastic'. Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 95.

<sup>24</sup> Chang Nam-fung (Zhang Nanfeng) points out in an email in 2002 that a literal translation of Oscar Wilde in the mid 1920s also bears the label *yishu*; thus the distinction between *yishu* and *yi* might be arbitrary. Oscar Wilde 王爾德, *Lady Windermere's Fan* = 少奶奶的扇子, trans. by Yang Yisheng 楊逸聲譯述 (Shanghai: Datong Tushushe 大通圖書社, 1926). It is unclear whether this was a general trend, but if it was, it serves as another example of indiscriminate Chinese expression and shows, moreover, how people remain confused about the nature of translation despite being stuck to notions like 'literiness' and 'faithfulness'.

<sup>25</sup> For a concise definition of 'free translation', 'literal translation' and 'literalism', see Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie (eds), *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997). The distinction depends primarily on the unit of translation and whether the translator chooses to be skewed to the structure of the source text or to the linguistic norms of the target language. It is not the purpose of this thesis to turn round the wheel and recount the free/literal dichotomy that is 'probably the most frequently encountered in traditional accounts of translation' for I agree with the editors that 'it is generally agreed nowadays that free and literal translation do not form a binary contrast, and that the most appropriate translation strategy will vary according to the text-type being translated and the purpose of the translation.' Ibid, p. 63. I agree also with Hockett that 'there are as many degrees of literalness and freedom of translation as there are levels of hierarchical structure.' Ibid, pp. 95-96. Peter Newmark, while remarking that the central problem of whether to translate literally or freely still remains on the theoretical level despite the awareness of more practical translational realities, juxtaposes eight translation methods according to their orientation toward the source language and target language. Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (Hemel Hempstead: Phoenix ELT, 1995;

Broadly speaking, *shu*, *fushu*, *yishu* and *dazhi* arose in Yan Fu's time as similar to the concept of 'translation', however fuzzy that concept might have been. The Chinese term for 'translating', 'translation' or 'translator' is usually *yi* 譯 or *fanyi* 翻譯, which can be used in verb or noun form and bears the same transcription and tone as the word for 'change' or 'exchange' (*yi*) 易.<sup>26</sup> According to a Tang Dynasty commentary on the *Rites*, 'translation is equivalent to change, that is, changing the language for mutual intelligibility.'<sup>27</sup> It is no coincidence that the Chinese book of wisdom and 'guide to life' is simply called *The Changes*, or *Yi (of the Zhou Dynasty)*, to which Yan Fu frequently referred in his commentary translations and which, to be examined in the next chapter, guided his thinking and conduct. Buddhist monk Shi Fayun of the Song Dynasty used similar metaphors of change and exchange, remarking that translation is 'exchanging what is present with what is lacking, thus manifesting the methods of another place through the fabric of this place.'<sup>28</sup> This seems to imply a kind of transference that is equal on both sides, for the target system has fabric for exchange and more importantly, it is fully capable of manifesting whatever methods the other system has to offer, even if the source is a sacred one.

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first publ. 1988), pp. 45-53.

<sup>26</sup> According to the *Classic of Rituals*, *yi* was the term in northern dialects for the post of official translator. The position was called *ji* 寄 [send] in the east, *xiang* 象 [imitate] in the south and *didi* 狄鞮 [understand] in the west. Chen Yugang 陳玉剛 (ed.), *Zhongguo Fanyi Wenxue Shigao* 中國翻譯文學史稿 [A History of Chinese Translated Literature] (Beijing: Zhongguo Duiwai Fanyi Chubanshe 中國對外翻譯出版公司, 1989), p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Jia Gongyan 賈公彥, *Zhouli Yishu* 周禮義疏 [Commentary on the Book of Rites of the Zhou Dynasty], quoted in Chen Yugang, *ibid*; my translation.

<sup>28</sup> The Chinese word for 'fabric' is *jing* 經, which is the same word for 'classics'. See Shi Fayun 釋法雲, *Fanyi Mingyiji* 翻譯名義集 [Anthology of Translation Terminology], 2 vols. (Jiangsu: Guangling Guji 廣陵古籍, 1990), I, p. 13; my translation.



Shi Fayun also compared translation to ‘reversing a double-faced embroidery, with adornment on both sides but just looking different on the left and the right’.<sup>29</sup> This reminds us of the Renaissance metaphor of the reversed tapestry by Cervantes.<sup>30</sup> However the Chinese metaphor seems to be free from the sense of inferiority of European vernaculars before the superiority of classical languages. The down side of a tapestry is inferior to its up side. A double-faced embroidery, however, seems to be ‘equal’, almost the same on both sides, though it is questionable whether, for instance, a right-hand man is equally important as a ‘left-hand man’, if there is such an expression. Shi Fayun probably assumed that Buddhist doctrines were equally demonstrable in every language, just as Bible translators believe that the ‘Word’ of God is equally translatable into all languages – after the Reformation, to be precise. Yet it is important to interpret Shi Fayun’s metaphors alongside an early Chinese etymological interpretation of translation, that is, ‘transferring the speech of barbarians from four directions (across the boundary)’.<sup>31</sup> With a tradition whose literate culture was considered superior to neighbouring states and where no religion could rival the supremacy of institutional Confucianism, intellectuals were adept at assimilating other systems for the regeneration of Confucianism, while sutra translators did not feel as inferior to the ‘original’ literate culture as their European counterparts. They undoubtedly had awe toward their sacred source, but they were guided more by ‘faith’ than by the ‘word’ or ‘text’, considering the oral tradition of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> André Lefevere, ‘Introductory Comments II’, in *Cross Cultural Transfers: Warwick Working Papers in Translation*, ed. by Heloisa Goncalves Barbosa (England: Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Warwick, 1994), pp. v-vii (p. v).

<sup>31</sup> Zhang Shunhui 張舜徽, *Shuowen Jiezi Yuezhu* 說文解字約注 [The Annotated *Shuowen Jiezi*], 3 vols. (Luoyang: Zhongzhou Shuhuashe 中州書畫社, 1983), I, 5: 65. *Shuowen Jiezi* is an ancient dictionary compiled by Xu Shen 許慎, Old Text School scholar who was well versed in the Five

early Buddhism and the example of the most venerable sutra translator Xuanzang, who showed us that his exegesis was based on the doctrines of his own sect, which he honestly believed to be the authentic interpretation.

The exegesis of classics constitutes another metaphor for translation: ‘The sages are the mouth of heaven, the virtuous are their translators (*yi*).’<sup>32</sup> Thus translation as an abstraction signifies a form of change being utilized as a tool to certain ends, allowing higher level functions: an erudite practice, an act of virtue, an exchange between methods of living and the transmission of the *dao* (as expounded in classics). Yet to many people, there seem to be little distinction between translation as an abstraction and translation as a product or occupation. The latter perspective tends to associate translation with imitation, what Confucius regarded as the petty business of the ‘tongue-man’. It is beside the point to limit the multiple dimensions of translation to a single perspective. It is even absurd to prescribe any absolute standard for translation before predicating the abstraction on variables such as the specific ends and functions concerned under specific contexts.

Yan Fu never systematically discussed his views on the nature of translation. More often than not, as shown in previous chapters, he pitied himself as an underestimated translator, though he remained proud of his own achievement. In a letter in 1902, he told an editor that the best way to learning was through research, next through reading and tutelage, both to be conducted in one’s own language, while the least desirable

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Classics and presented the book to the emperor in AD 121.

<sup>32</sup> *Ciyuan* 辭源 [Dictionary of Etymology] (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1988; first publ. 1915), p. 1588; my translation.



way was to learn through translations since there would be many gaps and losses.<sup>33</sup>

He may not have been referring to his own translations, since he deliberately inserted his own critique and might not consider his deviations as gaps, let alone losses. Rather he often criticized contemporary translations for being erroneous and substandard, and contemporary translators and interpreters 象寄之才 [those who imitate and send] for being superficial, partial and indiscriminate. His mentor Wu Rulun clearly shared the same view. In a letter to Yan, Wu remarked that with a noble purpose in mind, Yan would be ‘definitely reluctant to follow’ the ‘method’ (*fa*) 法 of the ‘tongue-man’, which would defeat the ‘profound purpose’ of *shuzuo* 述作 [lit. narrate; compose].<sup>34</sup> This reveals that Wu despised the method or role of the ‘tongue-man’, although he did not explain what that method was. Most probably he meant literal translation or imitation of the source text. He apparently understood that Yan did not aim at this and considered *shuzuo*, or narrative writing more meaningful and adorable.

Based on the discussion so far, it is evident that for Yan, Wu, critics, publishers, and for many people today, the conception of the ‘product’ or ‘occupation’ of translation is inexorably tied up with the notion of literalism (even for those who favour free translation). It is also clear that Yan and Wu did not see *Tianyanlun* as ‘translation proper’, which implied despicable imitation of the source and according to Yan, was similar to ‘picking up the words of others instead of original composition and thus not

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<sup>33</sup> Yan Fu, ‘Yu *Waijiaobao* Zhuren Shu’ 與“外交報主人”書 [Letter to the Editor of *Foreign Affairs Journal*], 1902, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 557-65 (p. 561).

<sup>34</sup> Wu Rulun 吳汝綸, ‘Zhi Yan Fu Shu’ 致嚴復書 [Letter to Yan Fu], 9 March 1897, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1560-61. Wu reckoned that Yan probably used Huxley as a pretext to vent his political frustration and satire, to make an exhortative statement about the possible elimination of the Chinese race and to present this work as a guide to governance and social progress.

being capable of self accomplishment'. They, too, seemed to see translation on two levels: an occupational level, where translators are of inferior status producing replicas; and a erudite level, where translation is a tool to the transmission of higher learning and the pursuit of the *dao*, necessitating mediation between Chinese and Western thinking. This goes in line with the discussion in chapter one about how some reverend translators in history did not see themselves as workers of a translation occupation, and how they saw translation mainly as a tool to higher ideological and cosmological ends. Just as Buddhist master Xuanzang remained faithful to his syncretism of varied Buddhist doctrines based primarily on the exegetical tradition of his own sect rather than 'a' source text, so did Yan Fu remain faithful to a cause higher than an immediate text. Seen in this light, the argument that Yan Fu still held faithfulness to the source as 'the' prime goal in translation despite his failure to achieve it, due to the need to cater for an unsophisticated readership in a national crisis, appears feeble, almost irrelevant. Conceivably any seeming reference to faithfulness to the source text by Yan Fu serves more as an apologetic than a conscious claim to translation standard.

By claiming to be a narrative writer, Yan Fu hinted to his Confucian readers that he was engaged in the transmission of higher learning in search of the *dao*. The tie between narration and transmission of the *dao* was ancient. It was generally held that to transmit the *dao*, which had been manifested through ancient sage-kings who achieved social harmony on earth and cosmological harmony with nature, Confucius 'edited' and 'interpreted' the *Classic of Songs*, the *Classic of Documents*, the *Classic of Rites*, the *Classic of Music*, the *Classic of Changes* and 'compiled' *Spring and*



*Autumn Annals*, which together form ‘the Six Classics’ of the Confucian canon.<sup>35</sup>

Notwithstanding such an outstanding repertoire, Confucius refused to claim authorship and considered himself merely ‘transmitting’ 傳 (*chuan*) or ‘narrating’ 述 (*shu*) the abstruse and eloquent *dao* as manifested by ancient sage-kings, for he remained ‘true’ 信 (*xin*) to it throughout and did not ‘invent’ 作 (*zuo*) anything.<sup>36</sup>

Nan Huaijin notes that this belief is not the same as obsession or superstition, since Confucius conducted serious evidential research before writing and editing.<sup>37</sup>

William Theodore De Bary remarks that Confucius, as a teacher in *The Analects*, started not with indoctrination but with learning, and as such laid down a fine

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<sup>35</sup> There are controversies over the ‘authorship’ of such works; the *Classic of Music* is long lost. But it is generally believed that Confucius devoted the latter part of his life to collating these ancient works after he had failed to persuade any head of state to adopt his system of virtuous government even though his virtuous name had travelled far and wide across the various states.

<sup>36</sup> Confucius’ disciples recorded him as saying:

The Master said, I have ‘transmitted [*shu*] what was taught to me without making up [*zuo*] anything of my own’. I have been faithful [*xin*] to and loved the Ancients [...] I have never grown tired of learning nor wearied of teaching others what I have learnt. These at least are merits which I can confidently claim. The Master said, The thought that ‘I have left my moral power untended, my learning unperfected, that I have heard of righteous men, but been unable to reform them’ – it is these thoughts that disquiet me.

Arthur Waley (trans.), *The Analects* = 論語 (Beijing: Waiyu Jiaoyu Yu Yanjiu Chubanshe 外語教育與研究出版社, 1998), p. 79; my brackets.

The ‘Ancients’ refer to the sage-kings before eleventh century BC who invented, that is, *zuo*, writing, agriculture, rites and all kinds of systems, and it was believed that only those bearing the right name and position could invent. So Confucius considered his works merely attempts to transmit the teaching of the ancients. Waley also notes that Mozi, born shortly after Confucius’ death, also mentioned: ‘A gentleman does not make anything up; he merely transmits.’

<sup>37</sup> A notable example is with the editing of the *Classic of Documents*, in which Confucius excluded the history of legendary sage-kings Huangdi 黃帝 and Emperor Yao 堯 since he could not ascertain the credibility of the scanty documents about them. See Nan Huaijin *Lunyu Biecai* 論語別裁 [Tailored Remarks on *The Analects*] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe 復旦大學出版社, 2000), pp. 268-69.

tradition of 'learning for one's self' 成己之學.<sup>38</sup> Confucian learning aimed at setting oneself at ease with the *dao*, for self-fulfillment and for helping others to succeed in doing the same.<sup>39</sup> An important way to self-learning was to study the classics and engage in exegesis for narration and transmission of the *dao*. Confucius saw himself as a narrator, but today he is often seen as the 'producer' of his editions, exegeses and compilations, his 'classics' in turn attributed to his 'own genius', venerated as 'the original text' for subsequent Confucian study. Many a Confucian exegete after him also considered their critiques, commentaries and exegeses narration of the all inclusive *dao*, even though there should be little problem today about their being a text 'producer'.<sup>40</sup> This implied a nostalgia for antiquity, which stemmed from the penetrating vision of a golden and glorious past advocated by Confucius.<sup>41</sup> Yan Fu was part of this tradition too. Having asserted a fundamental evolutionary outlook pronouncing a progressively modern *dao* in earlier newspaper critiques and *Tianyanlun*, he went on in subsequent translations to examine compatible foreign propositions of various disciplines, using the source text as a point of departure for his

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<sup>38</sup> Wm. Theodore De Bary, *Learning for One's Self: Essays on the Individual in Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. De Bary notes that Confucian self-fulfillment entails a kind of Confucian personalism rather than the modern concept of 'individualism' and has nothing to do with selfishness.

<sup>40</sup> Ren Jiyu stresses that as in sutra translation, there had been a tradition since Confucius and Mencius of narrative writing (*shu*) to replace original writing (*zuo*) and of quoting from the classics without clear acknowledgement. Some interpreters maintained that they were 'faithful' to the source text but many just developed their own views and digressed remarkably from the source. But Ren comments that such writings are a product of the times and can be very useful in the study of the thought and academic background of the exegete. See Ren's foreword to Fang Guangchang 方廣鎰 (ed.), *Banruoxinjing Zhuyi Yanjiu* 般若心經譯注研究 [A Study of Translations and Exegeses on *Prajnaparamita*] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1985), pp. 56-67; Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. by Derk Bodde,



own critique and cross-cultural studies to consolidate the indigenous system on epistemology and methodology. As a bicultural reformer, translation became a unique means for his cultivation and truth-finding process, involving the transmission of valid propositions he saw relevant to the study of his subject, whether foreign or indigenous, old or new, and the rectification of propositions otherwise, rather than transmission of a single text. The core concern remained Confucian, and the argument that he retrogressed from 'iconoclasm' to 'conventionalism' appears superficial and politically biased.

The notions of 'faith', 'transmission' and 'narration' are important in the Confucian tradition and recur in Yan Fu's translation project. As laid down by Confucius in this tradition, acts of literature were equivalent to acts of virtue, and the highest embodiment of virtue was manifested in the pristine classics. The Chinese word for 'classic' is *jing* 經, which morphologically means the warp threads of fabric and suggests continuous transmission of virtuous principles channelled through ancient sages, to be applied to every aspect of life and practised in every functional role. Buddhist sutras are called *fojing* in Chinese, *fo* meaning Buddhist and *jing* meaning classics. Yan Fu often referred to Spencer, Darwin and other Western scholars he admired as 'sages' and their works as 'classics'. This is more than just exaggeration, for he genuinely believed, and reiterated, that the scientific epistemologies and methodologies propounded in Western works were conducive to rejuvenating primordial Confucian values and illuminating the *dao* in the modern world. The marginal status of the translator denied Yan Fu the opportunity to accomplish political feats, but through *yishu* or narrative writing, he could still hope to produce important

discourses and inherit the Confucian tradition of narrating and transmitting manifestations of the *dao*. The existential situation of his time required that this be done in the form of a cultural hybrid. He had hoped to transmit this hybrid to his students but the success of *Tianyanlun* expanded his readership and spurred his cause. Yan Fu's writings and translations were deeply set in a *dao*-oriented tone, though this important point is often neglected, probably due to a lack of understanding of the Confucian literary tradition, which warrants some clarification before we can fully appreciate what may have been Yan Fu's intentions.

'Literature' itself is as changing and complicated a concept in Chinese as in English.<sup>42</sup> It is interesting to remember that literature, regardless of race or culture, began with an oral tradition and a great portion of the earliest texts handed down do not probably fall into the rather modern category of 'pure' literature, for the concept of literature used to encompass a broad range of subjects and genres.<sup>43</sup> In modern Chinese, the 'equivalent' term for literature is *wenxue* 文學, a loan term in fact from the modern

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<sup>42</sup> Derived from the Latin words *litteratus* (learned) and *littera* (a letter of the alphabet), the word 'literature' can mean, inter alia, mankind's entire body of written works that are intended for reading; or writings distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the excellence of their execution, which give pleasure, elevate and transform experience, and function in society as a continuing symbolic criticism of values; or 'pure' literature, 'art for art's sake' as many modern readers of literature see it. See for example, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: <http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=119364>; <http://serach.eb.com/ebi/aaarticle?eu=297480>.

<sup>43</sup> The concept of literature and the development of literary traditions are different across literary cultures. In early Chinese, Greek, Hebrew and Indian civilizations, for instance, literature was a very broad category. In Europe, starting from the Romantic Age, except for Marxist critics, literature is often seen as an autonomous pursuit in itself, with the communicative and aesthetic functions being stressed over the utilitarian functions. In the Confucian tradition, the highest forms of literature included the classics, the histories, philosophical expositions and anthological works, and the didactic role of literature was often stressed over its aesthetic function, until notably the May Fourth Movement,



Japanese translation of 'literature', literature itself being an aesthetic category as distinguished from other disciplines such as history, philosophy or science.<sup>44</sup> *Xue* 學 as a verb literally means to learn, study, imitate or speak; it can also be used as a noun. *Wen* 文, originally a pictograph of interlocking lines, is polysemous and can be used as a noun, verb or adjective, literally meaning vein, pattern, decoration, virtue, word, writing, rite, learning, literary or cultural deed, or being temperate and elegant.<sup>45</sup>

The concept of *wen* was first discussed in great depth in the *Classic of Changes*, which still remains one of the most influential works in Chinese intellectual thought, forming part of the Confucian and Daoist canons.<sup>46</sup> Yan Fu mentioned this work

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which sought to disband this tradition.

<sup>44</sup> See Wang Li 王力, 'Hanyu Cihuishi' 漢語詞匯史 [History of Development of Chinese Lexicon], in *Wang Li Wenji* 王力文集 [Collected Essays of Wang Li], 20 vols. (Jinan: Shangdong Jiaoyu Chubanshe 山東教育出版社, 1990), XI, pp. 491-842 (p. 697).

<sup>45</sup> Nowadays, *wen* is usually taken to mean decoration, rhetoric or form in writing, vis-à-vis *zhi* 質 or *dao* 道, which denote content or substance. It can also refer to a piece of writing as in the term *wenshu* 文書 [article; letter], culture as in the term *wenhua* 文化 [cultivate; transform], or language as in the terms *wenzi* 文字 [writing; word] and *yuwen* 語文 [speech; writing].

<sup>46</sup> The *Classic of Changes* or *I, I Ching*, *Yijing* or *Zhouyi* 周易 [The Changes of Zhou Dynasty], often considered to be the ancient Chinese book of wisdom, was in its earliest form a set of sixty-four six-lined configurations (a combination of six straight and/or broken horizontal lines) called hexagrams that have been consulted as an oracle for thousands of years. According to the ancients, numbers mirror the order of the universe and the myriad things in reality exist first in image form. Within the undifferentiated whole, known as *taiji* or *t'ai chi* 太極 [the Number One], exist two primary forces of the universe, numbers one and two, whose interaction brings about the creation of all things. The two forces are called *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤, respectively also called *yang* 陽 and *yin* 陰, or the Creative and the Receptive. Images emerge from the Creative (represented by a solid horizontal line, symbolizing heaven, ruler, father, masculinity, etc.), which are then captured by the Receptive (represented by a broken line, symbolizing earth, subordinates, mother, feminineness, etc.) and nurtured into being. Symbiosis and opposition of the two forces give rise to various changes concerning the ways of heaven, earth and man, which are configured into trigrams and further combined as hexagrams. Just at the point where harmony is reached, changes again unfold, working

frequently in his writings and translations, including *Tianyanlun* and the pertaining 'General Remarks on Translation', where he laid down the *xin-da-ya* translation principles. The *Classic of Changes* embodies major primordial values on which Confucian poetics were based and which Yan Fu upheld, and it is important to analyze his translation principles on this basis rather than from the modern perspective of 'pure literature'.

According to the *Classic of Changes*, *wen* refers to the visible trace of civil virtue central to *kun*, one of the two fundamental cosmic principles besides *qian* which together, through constantly changing symbiosis, orchestrate the myriad things filling

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into ceaseless activities in a constant flux. The following explanation in Confucius' 'Appended Phrases' 系辭 to *The Changes* shows how this works:

As a book, the *Changes* is something which is broad and great, complete in every way. There is the *dao* of Heaven in it, the *dao* of Man in it, and the *dao* of Earth in it. It brings these three powers together and then doubles them. This is the reason for there being six lines. What these six embody are nothing other than the *dao* of the three powers. Since the *dao* consists of change and action, we refer to it in terms of the 'moving lines' [*yao*]. Since the moving lines consist of different classes, we refer to them as 'things.' Since these things mix in together, we refer to these as 'patterns.' When these patterns involve discrepancies, fortune is at issue there.

Quoted from Richard John Lynn (trans.), *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 92-93. See also Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Zhouyi Zhengyi* 周易正義 [The Correct Meaning of *The Changes* of Zhou Dynasty] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 1999), pp. 318-19.

See also Carol K. Anthony, *The Philosophy of the I Ching* (Stow: Anthony Publishing, 1998). The *Classic of Changes* is not only a Confucian classic, but also part of the Daoist canon. Laozi states a similar view about creation:

The way begets one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures. The myriad creatures carry on their backs the *yin* and embrace in their arms the *yang* and are the blending of the generative forces of the two.

D. C. Lau, (trans.), *Lao Tze: Tao Te Ching* (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 49.

Today, the thinking of the *Classic of Changes* is still largely incorporated in Chinese culture; it is also influential in Japan and Korea.



heaven and earth.<sup>47</sup> The contemplation and learning (*xue*) of *wen* is one way of investigating things for the completion of knowledge, leading to sincerity in thought and rectification of the mind and consequently cultivation of the person, regulation of the family, orderly governance of the state and ultimately of all under heaven.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Wen* is attributive to the fifth line of the hexagram *kun*, which represents the acme of feminineness, serenity and compliance, attained when the discriminate superior man, emblemed in the proper majestic colour of yellow, occupying the proper position and executing his duties to the ruler properly, manifests civil graces within the centre of his being and attains the acme of excellence. That is why Confucius' manifestation (*wen*) in words (*yan*) of the abstruse meaning and moral implication of the two fundamental *qian* and *kun* hexagrams is called *Wenyan* 文言. For description of the *kun* hexagram, see Lynn, pp. 142-51; James Legge (trans.), *Book of Changes* = 周易 (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1993), pp. 59-61; Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, pp. 24-33; Wu Hua 伍華 (ed.), *Zhouyi Da Cidian* 周易大辭典 [Dictionary of *The Changes of Zhou Dynasty*] (Guangzhou: Zhongshan Daxue Chubanshe 中山大學出版社, 1993), pp. 69-70; Zhang, Shanwen 張善文 (ed.), *Zhouyi Cidian* 周易辭典 [Dictionary of *The Changes of Zhou Dynasty*] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1996), p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> The following examples from *The Analects* show the different applications of *wen*, which fall primarily into the scope of culture rather than pure literature. This is important to understanding Yan Fu's views on *wen*, on which his primary translation principle of *xin* is based.

The Master said, A young man's duty is to behave well to his parents at home and to his elders abroad, to be cautious in giving promises and punctual in keeping them, to have kindly feelings towards everyone, but seek the intimacy of the Good. If, when all that is done, he has any energy to spare, then let him study the polite arts.

Waley, *The Analects*, p. 5.

Waley notes that Confucius took *wen* to mean 'polite arts', that is, learning to recite the *Classic of Songs*, practise archery, deportment and so on, in learning. Legge translates *wen* here as 'polite studies' in *The Chinese/English Four Books*, p. 67. According to the authoritative annotations compiled by Liu Baonan (1791-1855), *wen* refers to written works handed down from the past and the six civil arts 道藝 (*daoyi*) conducive to the learning of the *dao*, including rites, music, archery, equestrian skill, writing and arithmetic. See Liu Baonan 劉寶楠, *Lunyu Zhengyi* 論語正義 [The Correct Meaning of *The Analects*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1990), I, pp. 18-19. In another context, Confucius took *wen* to mean cultural ornamentation, in complementarity to *zhi* or natural substance, as a quality of the superior man:

The Master said, When natural substance [*zhi*] prevails over ornamentation [*wen*], you get the boorishness of the rustic. When ornamentation prevails over natural substance, you get the pedantry

Confucius believed that this kind of social, moral and political sublimity was achieved by the ancient sage-kings, and that its path (*dao*) could be ‘narrated’ and imitated through the practice of *wen* and *xue*: learning to define the social and political construction of the self in one’s service to the world, the individual could understand the nature of man and the myriad things. Thus in the Confucian tradition, the concepts *wen* and *xue* were one and inseparable, *wenxue* meaning both *wenzhang* 文章 [writing manifesting virtue] and *boxue* 博學 [extensive learning], the practice of which helps attainment of the *dao*, a markedly different concept from the present day perception of ‘pure literature’ and the Japanese loan term *wenxue*.<sup>49</sup>

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of the scribe. Only when ornament and substance are duly blended do you get the true gentleman.

Waley, *ibid*, p. 73; my brackets.

Legge translates *wen* and *zhi* as ‘accomplishment’ and ‘solid qualities’ respectively for this passage; Legge, *ibid*, p. 111. According to Liu Baonan, *zhi* is the root 本 (*ben*) and *wen* the application 行 (*xing*) of rite 禮 (*li*); Liu, *ibid*, pp. 233-34. Thus *wen* does not simply mean decoration or rhetoric; in most cases, it refers to cultural virtue and accomplishment to be cultivated.

<sup>49</sup> In Confucian poetics, it is important to take *wen* and *xue* as both sides of the same coin and the mere mention of one implies the other. Confucius regarded *wenxue* as culture and learning when evaluating his students:

The Master said, My adherents in Ch’ên and Ts’ai were none of them in public service. Those who worked by moral power were Yen Hui, Min Tze-ch’ien, Jan Kêng and Jan Yung. Those who spoke well were Tsai Yü and Tzu-kung. Those who surpassed in handling public business were Jan Ch’iu and Tzu-lu; in culture and learning [*wenxue*], Tze-yu and Tzu-hsia.

Waley, p. 129; my bracket.

Moral virtue, oral rhetoric, public administration and cultured learning constituted the four main areas of study under Confucius. It is again important not to interpret these four skills solely from a present day perspective. There is no doubt about the importance of morality and government administration in Confucian education. Oral rhetoric was also essential at Confucius’ time, when decorous diplomacy helped to achieve peace and balance between the various states. As for cultured learning, it is pointed out that Tze-yu was known for his achievement in rites, while Tzu-hsia was known for his transmission of the classics after Confucius, thus passing on the key to the *dao*. See Liu Baonan, pp. 441-42. See also Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Zhongguo Wenxue Pipingshi* 中國文學批評史 [A History of Chinese Literary Criticism], 2 vols. (Tianjin: Baihua Wenyi Chubanshe 百花文藝出版社, 1999; first publ.



The Confucian *wenxue* or ‘literary’ tradition, so to speak, was holistic: the performance of literature was a deed in itself, serving simultaneously didactic, aesthetic, moral, cultural and political functions. The ultimate goal was transcendental, so far as Confucius or the ‘true’ Confucian gentleman was concerned, and those who perceive Confucian learning as essentially utilitarian in nature miss the heart of the matter. With the sanctification of Confucius and his works and deeds, together with subsequent commentaries, exegeses, as well as other expository writings, the Confucian *wenxue* canon gradually expanded.<sup>50</sup> The Confucian view of *wenxue* dominated the Chinese literary tradition formally until the abolition of the traditional education system and civil service examination system in 1905.<sup>51</sup>

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1934, 1947), I, pp. 14-28.

<sup>50</sup> In the Chinese tradition, the central canon still studied today were mostly produced before the third century BC, that is, the pre-Han period. In corollary to ‘the Five Classics’ are ‘the Four Books’: *Great Learning* 大學, *Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸, *The Analects* 論語 and *Mencius* 孟子. The first two are excerpts from the *Classic of Rites*; *The Analects* contains Confucius’ speech recorded by his disciples, while *Mencius* records the words and deeds of Mencius, a student of Confucius’ grandson Zisi 子思 (BC 483-402). Around *Spring and Autumn Annals* spun three commentaries, *Zuo’s* 左氏傳, *Gongyang* 公羊傳 and *Guliang* 穀梁傳. The expository and philosophical prose ascribed to other pre-Han thinkers such as Laozi 老子, Zhuangzi 莊子, Xunzi 荀子, Sunzi 孫子 and Mozi 墨子 are also important. The *Historical Records* by Grand Historian Sima Qian in the Han Dynasty is considered to have set the norm of dynastic histories and classical narrative prose for subsequent ages. Then follow a myriad of ‘secondary’ materials including annotations, commentaries, sub-commentaries, essays, critiques, edicts and imperial submissions that together make up a sea of Confucian literature. This repertoire is important, for it is against such a scheme that Wu Rulun tried to assess Yan Fu and T. H. Huxley in his foreword to *Tianyanlun*.

<sup>51</sup> It is important to note that historical development is often oscillating, dialectical and multidimensional, so the tracing of a ‘mainstream’ trend only represents the plotting of the discursive progress of a predominant cause engaging the majority of individuals, parties or institutions with the greatest influence on resource allocation and does not preclude the development of opposite literary trends. Contemporaneous to the holistic literary view of Confucius, Mozi 墨子 (c. 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC), stoical founder of Mohism, proposed a highly didactic and political view of literature, requiring that

However, with the increasing specialization of the study of rhetoric and the study of the classics, the notion of *wenxue* was streamlined into *wen* and *xue*, that is, writing and learning separately, after China was reunited under the great Han Empire, each developing along increasingly distinct paths in the ensuing centuries alongside the revival of Daoism and infiltration of Buddhism in the indigenous system. The development of aesthetic, light, religious and vernacular literature, as well as accompanying literary criticism led to clarification of the notion of literature and consequently the growing independence of pure literature from learning and

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writing and learning be clear, unadorned, argumentative and expressive of *yi* 儀 [standard; etiquette; rite]. He suggested that any discourse or doctrine be established upon a standard of judgement and be tested on the basis of the classics, the people and its application to the administration of justice and government. See Mei Yi-pao, *The Ethical and Political Works of Motze* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1929), pp. 189-98. On the other hand, naturalist Daoist masters Laozi and Zhuangzi held a sceptical view toward language, engendering a trend that prized telepathy over communication, sensibility over signification, intuition over knowledge and non-action over action. Like many Confucian adherents, Yan Fu also fancied Daoist naturalism and mysticism. He produced a sub-commentary to Wang Bi's commentary on Laozi. *Laozi* thus begins:

The way [*dao*] that can be spoken of [*dao*] is not the constant way; the name that can be named is not the constant name. The nameless was the beginning of heaven and earth; the named was the mother of the myriad creatures. Hence always rid yourself of desires in order to observe its secrets; but always allow yourself to have desires in order to observe its manifestations. These two are the same but diverge in name as they issue forth. Being the same they are called mysteries. Mysteries upon mysteries – the gateway of the manifold secrets[...]Therefore the sages keeps to the deed that consists in taking no action and practises the teaching that uses no words. The myriad creatures rise from it yet it claims no authority; it gives them life yet claims no possession; it benefits them yet exacts no gratitude; it accomplishes its task yet lays claim to no merit. It is because it lays claim to no merit that its merit never deserts it.

D. C. Lau (trans.), *Lao Tze: Tao Te Ching*, pp. 5, 6; my brackets.

For a brief overview of the economic and socio-political shaping forces of the Chinese literary tradition, see especially Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, *A Guide to Chinese Literature* (Ann Arbor: Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1997), pp. 1-60.



philosophy.<sup>52</sup> By the middle of the Tang Dynasty, however, the Confucian elite generally felt that the Confucian *dao* was being eclipsed by a profusion of flowery but empty parallel prose lacking in Confucian substance. This resulted in various appeals for ‘restoration of the ancient order’ (*fugu*) 復古 in an attempt to make writing, learning and the Confucian *dao* intact again, with intellectuals clamouring for a reintegration of the moral and edifying functions of literature. This culminated in a revival of Confucianism, or ‘Neo-classical Movement’ (*fugu yundong*) 復古運動 starting from the eight century and peaking in the twelfth century.

From a literary perspective, there was a counteraction against aesthetic literature, known as the ‘Ancient Prose Movement’ (*guwen yundong*) 古文運動, ancient prose being a reformed style of prose which claimed inheritance of the legacy of the *dao*-embodying Confucian classics of the antique Zhou Dynasty. The so-called ‘School of Ancient Prose’ (*guwen jia*) 古文家, championed by a dozen prose masters

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<sup>52</sup> Starting from the Han Dynasty, more ornate genres started to appear, notably rhythmical parallel prose (*pianwen*) 駢文, as well as rhapsodic prose-poem (*fu*) 賦, the structure of which became fully developed in the Period of Disunion between the end of the Han and beginning of the Tang Dynasty and continued to rival the popularity of Confucian prose up to the Qing Dynasty. The Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasties witnessed the splendour of modern-style poetry (with stringent versification), *ci*-poetry (verse set to certain tunes), and drama (*zaju*) 雜劇 respectively. Concomitant was the development of more peripheral and vernacular genres, such as light essay (*xiaopin wen*) 小品文, ballad (*yuefu*) 樂府, literary tale (*chuanqi*) 傳奇, story script (*huaben*) 話本, popular recitation of religious stories (*bianwen*) 變文, Daoist and Buddhist colloquy (*xuantan*) 玄談, varied evangelistic and secondary literature on Buddhist thought, and fiction (*xiaoshuo*) 小說. For an introduction to Chinese literature, see, *ibid*; James Robert Hightower, *Topics in Chinese Literature*, rev. edn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); Liu Wu-chi, *An Introduction to Chinese Literature* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966); André Lévy, *Chinese Literature, Ancient and Classical*, trans. by William H. Nienhauser, Jr. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000); Chen Shou-yi, *Chinese Literature: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Ronald Press, 1961); Guo Shaoyu,

of the Tang and Song Dynasties, emphasized ‘*wen* as a channel to *dao*’ (*wen yi guandao*) 文以貫道, with *wen* as their main, though not sole, object of study.<sup>53</sup> From a moralist perspective, the cause for consolidation of Confucian doctrines through the reinterpretation of ancient classics culminated in the Neo-Confucian Movement in the Song and Ming Dynasties, giving rise to the so-called ‘School of Dao Learning’ (*daoxue jia*) 道學家 that emphasized the ontology of *dao* as enshrined in *wen*, with *dao* as their main, again not sole, object of study.<sup>54</sup> The two schools saw themselves as successors of the *dao*; their main difference lay in the way of making the *dao* address the needs of the times, and their influence was mainly felt in the area of *wen* and *dao* respectively.<sup>55</sup> The seemingly dualistic pair *wen* and *dao* represents a complementarity rather than a dichotomy.<sup>56</sup>

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ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Han Yu, engine head of the Ancient Prose Movement, is often considered the resuscitator of the Confucian *dao* after Mencius and before Zhu Xi. Qian Mu points out that Han Yu could in fact be considered precursor of the School of Dao Learning. See Qian Mu 錢穆, *Zhongguo Jin-sanbainian Xueshushi* 中國近三百年學術史 [A History of Chinese Scholarship over the Past Three Hundred Years] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986; first publ. 1937).

<sup>54</sup> As mentioned in chapter 2, footnote 161, the School of Dao Learning was broadly divided into Rationalism and Idealism, with Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming as respective representative figures. Together they attracted a large following in the ensuing centuries forming a trend often known as Song metaphysics. Yan Fu was among a few Qing scholars to differentiate between the two venerable masters and their pseudo, pedantic followers.

<sup>55</sup> De Bary remarks that Zhu Xi reinterpreted the classics through commentaries to meet the needs of his times and like Confucius, he claimed no originality for himself in achieving a new synthesis. He also notes that Neo-Confucians, in their goal toward universal education, aspired to a spiritual ideal of sagehood for everyone, which is a syncretic response to Mahayana Buddhism’s conception of universal buddha-hood and the Buddhist doctrine on impermanence and moral relativism. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), I, pp. 667-69.

<sup>56</sup> While it is generally agreed that *wen* and *dao* are complementary, the chemistry between the two may differ as perceived by different intellectuals: *dao* is immanent in *wen* and/or vice versa; *dao*



With the advent of the Qing Dynasty, there were growing formalistic, decadent and separatist tendencies of the literati after the apex of the Ancient Prose and Dao Learning movements. There emerged a shift in thinking. In terms of research methodology, there was a view that the metaphysical interpretation of Confucian classics by the Song Neo-Confucians, an approach called 'Song Learning' (*songxue*) 宋學, was corrupted by Buddhist and Daoist thinking despite its claim to Confucian descendancy, probably due to the blending of the three streams after the Tang Dynasty.<sup>57</sup> Some scholars called for the succession of 'Han Learning' (*hanxue*) 漢學, representing an approach to classical learning based on textual criticism of 'untainted' classical texts prevalent in the Han Dynasty more than a millennium ago, which was considered to be closer in time and thus essence to the *dao* transmitted by primordial sage-kings and their pre-Han propounders (namely, Confucius and Mencius).<sup>58</sup> Song

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transcends *wen*; *wen* manifests *dao*; *dao* perfects *wen*. This kind of complementarity, also illustrated in other pairs of conceptual coordinates such as *yin* and *yang*, *qian* and *kun*, *li* and *qi* as mentioned in preceding chapters, is representative of the Chinese mode of thinking and representation: impressionistic signification characterized by subject awareness underlining intuitive reasoning expressed through paratactic language. It would be irrelevant to rationalize this against the textual and conceptual grids of literate-cultures characterized by a hypotactic language that underlies logical reasoning requiring object awareness.

<sup>57</sup> Zhou Yutong even suggests that Song Learning, as a reaction to Buddhism, is Confucian in appearance and Buddhist at heart. See Zhou Yutong 周予同, *Zhu Xi* 朱熹 [Zhu Xi] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1935), p. 5. See also Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, II, pp. 407-33, 630-31; Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Zhongguo Chan Sixiangshi* 中國禪思想史 [A History of Zen Thought in China] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 1995), p. 344.

<sup>58</sup> The two approaches represent different emphases in research methodology, often perceived as two schools of learning, and the names 'Han' and 'Song' do not confine their practice to their eponymic dynasties. In fact their rivalry began in early Qing, when the statecraft school attacked Song Learning as speculative, impractical, uncondusive to governance and leading to the domination of the Han race

Learning and Han Learning scholars left behind a legacy of prose mainly in the form of quotations and annotations respectively, rather than expository essays prevalent in the pre-Han era. Yet as Yan complained, there were many pseudo Confucian scholars who produced a profusion of didactic and formalistic prose, either in the form of lack-lustre academic prose, or stereotyped *bagu* essays prescribed by the civil service examinations, which had nevertheless become so prevalent that they were known as ‘current prose’ (*shiwen*) 時文, as opposed to ‘ancient prose’.<sup>59</sup> Such contemporary prose entailed a kind of academic passivity, ideological resignation and political apathy on the part of intellectuals by the time of the Qing Dynasty, so any call for restoration should not simply be dismissed as reactionary – it might equally be interpreted as a remonstrance to or reformation of current tendencies.

The Tongcheng Stream to which Yan Fu and Wu Rulun belonged claimed descendency from the Neo-classical Confucian Movement, stressing concomitant allegiance to both ‘succession of *wen*’ (*wentong*) 文統 and ‘succession of *dao*’ (*daotong*) 道統.<sup>60</sup> Tongcheng scholars were notable for their proposed syncretism of

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by the foreign Manchu court. See Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, II, pp. 630-31; Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), I, 10-12, 55-57.

<sup>59</sup> The *bagu* or eight-legged essay form was originally introduced as an invigorated hybrid of classical prose and parallel prose – both of which had become fossilized with the passage of time – in the Qing Dynasty for *keju* examinations. With increasingly indiscriminate practice, *bagu* essay had ironically turned fossilized by mid Qing.

<sup>60</sup> Tongcheng 桐城 is eponymic of Tongcheng County in Anhui Province north of the Changjiang River, where its precursor Dai Mingshi 戴名世 (1653-1713), its three forerunners Fang Bao 方苞 (1668-1749), Liu Dahui 劉大樞 (1698-1779) and Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1732-1815), and their successors came from. Wu Rulun’s master Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872), though a native of Xiangxiang County 湘鄉 from Hunan Province south of the Changjiang River, was a student of Yao Nai. Zeng



preceding prose tenets.<sup>61</sup> They stressed tripartite research in the areas of *yili* 義理 [study of principles], pursuing the ethical doctrines of classical studies and the metaphysical spirit of Song Learning; *kaozheng* 考證 [evidential research], inheriting the empirical spirit of textual studies pertaining to Han Learning; and *cizhang* 辭章 [philological study], practising the literary expression of both Han and Song Learning.<sup>62</sup> Aspiring to achieve the highest morality and the best literature, it

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was a weighty court official known for his defeat of the Taiping Rebellion, gathering his own *mofu* camp of aides (including Guo Songtao, first Chinese ambassador to Britain and France when Yan Fu studied in Britain), thus helping to boost the status of the stream in late Qing. Among Zeng's four most favourite students (one being Xue Fucheng, who later became ambassador to Europe), Wu Rulun was the only aide from Tongcheng County. Yan Fu's peer Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), monoglot scholar with a classical education who nevertheless became the greatest translator of European fiction in late Qing, was also influenced by Wu Rulun. For reference on Tongcheng prose, see Zhou Zhongming 周中明, *Tongcheng Pai Yanjiu* 桐城派研究 [Studies on the Tongcheng School] (Shenyang: Liaoning Daxue Chubanshe 遼寧大學出版社, 1999); Wu Mengxia 吳孟夏, *Tongcheng Wenpai Shulun* 桐城文派述論 [Discussion on the Tongcheng Literary School] (Hefei: Anhui Jiaoyu Chubanshe 安徽教育出版社, 1992); You Xinxiong 尤信雄, *Tongcheng Wenpai Xueshu* 桐城文派學術 [Scholarship of the Tongcheng Literary School] (Taipei: Wenjin Chubanshe 文津出版社, 1989); Anhui Renmin Chubanshe 安徽人民出版社 (eds.), *Tongcheng Pai Yanjiu Lunwenji* 桐城派研究論文集 [Collected Papers on the Study of the Tongcheng School] (Hefei: Anhui Renmin Chubanshe 安徽人民出版社, 1963).

<sup>61</sup> Schwartz speculates that Yan Fu's later combination of enthusiasm for the metaphysical sweep of Spencerian cosmology and for Mill's inductionist logic and empiricism reflects to some extent the efforts of his early teacher Huang Shaoyan to combine the values of Han and Song learning. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 24.

<sup>62</sup> Again it is important not to see the three tenets as mutually exclusive, or to ascribe the study of cosmic principle to Song metaphysics only or empirical textual studies to Han textual criticism only, for many scholars simultaneously engaged in both. See, for example, Levenson, I, pp. 56, 186. Yet it is equally undeniable that some scholars were primarily interested in prose, and some in moral training. A fourth area is sometimes added to Tongcheng research: *jingji* 經濟, which at that time meant the practice of both politics and economics. In modern Chinese, there are separate renderings for the two terms, following Japanese translations: *jingji* for 'economics' and *zhengzhi* 政治 for 'politics'. This is why, as explained in his translation of *The Wealth of Nations*, Yan Fu considered the term *jingji* too broad for 'economics' and used instead the term *jixue* 計學, borrowing from the indigenous terms

was generally esteemed as, albeit not without opposition, constituting the ‘mainstream’ of *guwen*, or ancient prose in the Qing Dynasty.<sup>63</sup>

It must be pointed out that Tongcheng represents a certain approach to writing, scholarship and moral education, though it is best remembered as a *guwen* stream. Different Tongcheng masters placed different emphasis on the form and substance of ancient prose, but the consensus was to engage in decorum evoking the Confucian *dao* and be conducive to social and moral order, through and only possible through structured discourse, natural flow, effortless techniques and graceful stylistics. Their select repertoire included essentially the Confucian classics and *Zuo's Commentary* of *Spring and Autumn Annals* of the pre-Han era, *Historical Records* of the Han Dynasty, and then the prose of the eight great *guwen* masters of the Tang and Song Dynasties. In addition were a collection of authoritative commentaries and sub-commentaries, including their own, which they claimed to be mainstream to fend off other streams of

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*guoji* 國計 [national economy] and *jiaji* 家計 [family livelihood], matching closely the etymological reference to ‘household’ of the Greek term ‘economics’. See his remarks on translation in Yan Fu, *Yuanfu*, I, pp. 7-15.

<sup>63</sup> In the works of Yao Nai, Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, a few contemporaries were recorded as saying that ‘all prose under heaven stems from Tongcheng’ and that ‘all ancient prose writers under heaven now follow the model of Tongcheng’. It is true that there was no rival for the Tongcheng Stream in the domain of ancient prose in the Qing Dynasty. The other two streams, named according to their eponymic counties Yanghu 陽湖 and Xiangxiang 湘鄉 from Jiangsu and Hunan Provinces respectively, are often considered its offspring rather than rival even though they emerged as a reaction to its exclusive but perhaps prudish study. It is sometimes thought that Tongcheng literary tenets were no better than escapist pretexts under the Manchu regime and few members were capable of living up to their high sounding mottoes. See, for example, Anhui Renmin Chubanshe, *Tongcheng Pai Yanjiu Lunwen Ji*, pp. 134-50. Liang Qichao commented that many of the less distinguished Tongcheng members were no scholar and no better than slavish writers. Liang Qichao 梁啟超, *Qing Dai Xueshu Gailun* 清代學術概論 [Introduction to Qing Learning] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1998; first publ. 1920), p. 69.



poetics. It is important to remember this Tongcheng repertoire and on a broader scale, the historicity of the fusion of language, learning and society, with literature functioning simultaneously as a social, moral and political act, or to be more precise, *wen* and *dao* as one. They form a reference grid against which Yan Fu and Wu Rulun often based their critique, and are essential to understanding the translational poetics of Yan Fu.

Yan's tripartite *xin-da-ya* translation principles were announced in his 'General Remarks on Translation' placed after a foreword by Wu Rulun and his own preface, all of which did not appear, or appeared quite differently, before the 1898 mass editions. These principles were probably developed after he had been persuaded into presenting his intellectual critique and narration of the *dao* which he had hoped to discuss with his students in the 'ordinary' form of a translation. As to be discussed in the next chapter, they represented a more profound philosophy in their own right. Here it is worthwhile to trace how Yan Fu, at the advice of Wu Rulun, adapted *Tianyanlun* for publication as a translation, which invariably reflects their translational poetics. Starting from the first drafts of *Tianyanlun*, which parallel more closely Yan's historical consciousness, Yan offered substantial textual hints of his rewriting approach, heralding and in fact legitimizing his hybridized translational discourse.

In the earliest Weijing edition available around March/April 1895, titled *Tianyanlun*, itself already a reprint of a probably pirate copy without any preface or introductory remarks, Yan Fu embedded short annotations randomly throughout the text and added indented commentaries at the end of most chapters in the 'Discussion' part (which

corresponds to the main text after Huxley's Prolegomena).<sup>64</sup> The annotations and commentaries clearly indicate the visibility of the translator, or in effect, the critic or narrator, who did not feel obliged to tell his readers where exactly he paraphrased, critiqued or substituted Chinese allusions in his text. The exact readership and reader response of this unauthorized version cannot be ascertained. But it can be reasonably argued that even though readers of the pirated edition might take his critique for a translation or take his alterations for Huxley's ideas, they would not worry about 'the' source, given their acquaintance with the Confucian narrative tradition and Chinese presumptive discourse, as long as the overall work toed the line of Confucian literature, performing a didactic and moral-political function in decent language.

In a contemporaneous manuscript, Yan disclosed his thinking as text producer in a preface dated 15 October 1896 and in a very short statement on his analogizing strategy. Due attention should be drawn to his preface, entitled '*Huxley Zhigong Tianyanlun Xu*' 赫胥黎治功天演論序 [Preface to Huxley's On Orderly Governance and Evolution of Nature], which suggests that the work is a guidebook to orderly and progressive governance, a major concern in the Confucian tradition. This long preface is impregnated with Confucian *wenxue* poetics. Yan begins with the assertion that sincere and exquisite arguments are common to all humans, transcending time, space, language and national borders, citing a similar quotation by J. S. Mill.<sup>65</sup> As a serious

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<sup>64</sup> See Yan Fu (trans.), *Tianyanlun Huikan Sanzhong* 天演論匯刊三種 [Three Editions of *Tianyanlun*] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998), pp. 1-79. This edition provides ready comparison of three versions of *Tianyanlun*: the 1895 Weijing Press edition, Yan's manuscript with a 1896 preface, and the 1901 Fuwen Press edition.

<sup>65</sup> The exact adjectives he used for veracious are *chengjing* 誠精 [sincere; exquisite] and *chengxin* 誠信 [sincere; truthful]. Ibid, pp. 81-84. The notion of sincerity is important in Confucian poetics and for Yan's three principles of translation, which will be elaborated in the next chapter.



scholar in pursuit of the *dao*, he is overjoyed to discover the essence of the classics resonated in later works and foreign works. Likening the logic in the *Classic of Changes* to deductive reasoning and that in *Spring and Autumn Annals* to inductive reasoning, the translator reminds his readers that traces of Western learning from the past two hundred years are already present in ancient Chinese classics, especially the *Classic of Changes*, which is considered to be the epitome of the entire universe. He holds that the four fundamentals of Western science – logic, mathematics, chemistry and physics – are already interlaced in that canon.<sup>66</sup> He specifically analogizes Newton's laws of motion and Spencer's cosmological speculation about things progressing from a simple to an advanced state to the two fundamental cosmic principles of *qian* and *kun*, which together produce and orchestrate the myriad things through constantly changing symbiosis, as specified in the *Classic of Changes*.<sup>67</sup>

After this lengthy discussion, Yan points out that any attempt to 'de-Westernize' foreign learning, to ascribe it to ancient Chinese thinking or to relegate it to the realm

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<sup>66</sup> Yan quotes Han-Dynasty historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (BC135-BC87) as saying that 'the *Classic of Changes* is based on the hidden, which is then made manifest, while *Spring and Autumn Annals* pushes back from that which is seen to that which is hidden.' Translated by Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 51.

<sup>67</sup> Newton's laws of motion state that if a body is at rest or moving at constant speed in a straight line, it will continue to do so unless it is acted upon by a force that is equal to the mass of the body times its acceleration, and that the actions of two bodies on each other are always equal in magnitude and opposite in direction. To draw an analogy, Yan quotes the following lines from the *Classic of Changes*: 'As for *Qian*, in its quiescent state it is focused, and its active state it is undeviating. This is how it achieves its great productivity.' See Lynn, p. 55. Spencer believes in pantheistic and naturalistic monism, in which the manifold phenomena of reality 'evolve' out of the womb of the 'Unknowable' and are mediated through the abstract categories of space, matter, time, motion, and force. Yan believes this kind of reasoning is already enveloped in the *Classic of Changes*: 'As for *Kun*, in its quiescent state it is condensed, and in its active state it is diffuse. This is how it achieves its capacious productivity.' Ibid, p. 56. See also Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power*, p. 52.

of instrument would only be a self-deceptive pretext to conceal weakness, claiming that his compatriots ought to be ashamed of their ignorance, sterility and inability to hand on the torch of learning ignited by ancient scholars, so that what lies latent in the Chinese tradition needs to be unearthed through modern Western learning. This is more satire than Sinocentrism, revealing his preoccupation with the highest learning, be it from China or the West, rather than with a text or a source. The only reference to the source text or author in this four-page preface occurs almost near the end:

Huxley's work is intended to rectify the unethical Spencerian free play of the cosmic process; some of his arguments bear striking resemblance to ancient Chinese tenets and his concern for self-strengthening and preservation of the race is crystal-clear. The latter should be Yan Fu's concern rather than Huxley's, as examined in the last chapter. Yan concludes that he would not be evasive should readers blame his translation, done over the long, weary summer, as empty talk uncondusive to politics. The former statement foreshadows considerable analogizing while the latter sounds like, again, a typical apologetic expected from a humble writer, hinting also at the typical political function expected of a work.

Apart from the long preface is a short piece entitled 'Translation Notes' 譯例, containing only four short points totaling about 130 Chinese words.<sup>68</sup> The four points are as follows. First, his translation mainly seeks to be communicative: reordering, addition and deletion are used to express the profound thought of the author without deviating from the main purpose. Second, where relevant and functionally equivalent, the numerous allusions to Western classics in the source text are substituted by allusions to Chinese classics and events for the sake of comprehensibility. Third, brief

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<sup>68</sup> Yan Fu, *Tiyanlun Huikan Sanzhong*, p. 85.



annotation is provided on the Greek and Roman masters mentioned in the source text, for any person devoted to Western learning ought to know them. Fourth, where certain foreign tenets were touched upon by Chinese masters, ending commentaries are added.

The main message of his translational remarks is clear: readers should expect a hybridized piece compatible with the Chinese conceptual grid, rather than an identity of the source text (though it remains doubtful whether the majority of his readers would worry about this at all). His claim that his adjustments do not deviate from the purport of the author is simply not true, almost dishonest by professional standard. It is difficult to ascertain why he should do this, but translational incompetence would be out of the question, given his intentional assimilation, and his ability to so, of various ideologies in his translation. It is possible that he had by then been persuaded into publishing his work and the translation notes were meant as a pretence to conform to the general expectation that a translation ought to be the same as its source. In any event, it is clear how unfruitful it would be to take his misleading apologetic, or 'political license', at face value in translation research.

This manuscript is broadly similar to the unauthorized version but contains numerous revisions written in the margins, some dated May and some July 1897, apparently in preparation for a revised edition and probably for publication as a translation. The revisions were largely based on Wu Rulun's comments on his manuscript. As representative figure of the Tongcheng literary school, the mainstream school of *guwen* and learning in the Qing Dynasty, Wu offered Yan advice on prose theory and

traditional learning.<sup>69</sup> He even suggested that his translations might help him enter officialdom, for it had been a tradition to secure an official post by presenting one's work to one's superior.<sup>70</sup> In a letter to Yan in March 1897, the Chinese master highly commended his mentee's expertise with what he referred to as 'the greatest translation in China', but tentatively suggested reducing the substitution of Western examples and quotations, noting that Huxley should not have known such Chinese examples; he also suggested that a textual distinction be made between the source and the target text, just like the sutra translators of the Song and Ming Dynasties differentiating imported Buddhist scriptures from indigenous Confucian compositions.<sup>71</sup> Presumably Wu was making his comments on the assumption that *Tianyanlun* had to 'look like' a

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<sup>69</sup> Having obtained the highest *jinshi* degree in the civil service examinations, Wu Rulun was first a student of court official Zeng Guofen and later recruited as an aide to viceroy Li Hongzhang. With a traditional educational background, he remained open to new ideas and supported the introduction of Western technology and education to strengthen the country. He employed instructors to teach English, Japanese and Western learning in Lianchi College 蓮池書院 to the south of Beijing where he operated after resigning from what he referred to as dirty politics. In the capacity of Registrar of the former of Peking University in his final years, he visited Japan for three months to study its school system. See the editors' foreword in Wu Rulun 吳汝綸, *Wu Rulun Chidu* 吳汝綸尺牘 [Letters of Wu Rulun] (Hefei: Huangshan Shushe 黃山書社, 1986), pp. 1-3.

<sup>70</sup> Wu Rulun, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu', 26 August 1896, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1559-60. Lacking the means to a formal Chinese tradition in his early years, Yan became associated with Wu probably around the time of the Sino-Japanese War when he was teaching in Tianjin and Wu in the vicinity of Beijing. It is evident from their personal exchanges that they shared an intimate mentor-mentee relationship. Wu believed that Yan was more learned and eloquent than his peers and encouraged him not to be disheartened by his hapless career. In a bibliography appended to a letter to an imperial examiner listing reference materials for schools, Wu specified, apart from regular classics for the Tongcheng School, a list of translated Western works for universities, including Yan's translations *Tianyanlun* and *Yuanfu*. Wu Rulun, *Wu Rulun Chidu*, p. 258. In a letter asking for a foreword to *Yuanfu*, his translation of *The Wealth of Nations*, Yan thanked Wu for his grooming but regretted that he had not had the fortune to meet his master earlier, so he remained a nobody in his mid years. Yan Fu, 'Yu Wu Rulun Shu', 29 January 1900, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 522-23. Yan was aggrieved when Wu died in 1903.

<sup>71</sup> Wu Rulun, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu', 9 March 1897, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1560-61.



translation for publication.

Yan was definitely eager to take the advice of his revered mentor. As Wang Hongzhi points out, Wu acted as Yan's patron and helped to raise the status of the lowly student of Western learning in the literary circle.<sup>72</sup> In August the same year, Yan told his cousin that *Tiyanlun* would soon be ready for print after amendment and addition of commentaries upon Wu's comments.<sup>73</sup> By November, Yan told Wu that the amendment was almost finished and he was sending his mentor a copy of his revised version for further comment, but he did not follow exactly the practice of the sutra translators.<sup>74</sup> Although Yan did trim and move a lot of his in-text analogies and comments to chapter-end commentaries, a lot still remained. This shows that he was reluctant to forsake the fruit of his higher learning. Wu approved of his mentee's amendment in his reply letter the following March. He also offered some advice on language. He proposed a succinct two-to-three-character heading for each chapter and suggested naming Part I as *daoyan* 導言 [introductory remarks] instead of *zhiyan* 卮言 [rambling remarks] (as in the manuscript), which he considered cliché, and *xuanshu* 懸疏 [profound commentaries] (as in the newspaper version), which he

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<sup>72</sup> Applying Lefevere's notion of patronage, Wang suggests that Yan's insistence on elegant language was a political move to conform to the poetics of the Tongcheng literary school to whom Wu belonged. Wang Hongzhi 王宏志, 'Chongshi "Xin, Da, Ya"- Lun Yan Fu De Fanyi Lilun' 重釋“信、達、雅”—論嚴復的翻譯理論 [Reinterpreting “Xin, Da, Ya” - On Yan Fu's Translation Theories], in *Chongshi "Xin, Da, Ya" - Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Fanyi Yanjiu* 重釋“信、達、雅”—二十世紀中國翻譯研究 [Reinterpreting “Xin, Da, Ya” - Translation Studies in China in the Twentieth Century] (Shanghai: Dongfang Chubanshichuan Zhongxin 東方出版中心, 1999), pp. 79-111 (p. 99).

<sup>73</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Wudi Shu' 與五弟書 [Letter to Fifth Cousin], 23 August 1897, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, p. 733. Yan also mentioned in the letter that *Tiyanlun* was borrowed by various parties, who had not yet returned their copies.

<sup>74</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Wu Rulun Shu' 與吳汝綸書 [Letter to Wu Rulun], 28 November 1897, in *Yan Fu Ji*,

considered a Buddhist term, both not original terminology.<sup>75</sup>

This manuscript forms the basis of the revised versions that were more widely circulated after 1898, which were either titled '*Tianyanlun*' or 'Huxley's *Tianyanlun*', dropping the earlier association with 'Orderly Governance', though they were generally perceived to be the same *Tianyanlun*. In the 1898 version, we can find the additions and alterations already marked in the manuscript but no longer those parts marked for deletion.<sup>76</sup> While there are commentaries bearing the cue 'Fu comments' at the end of all but seven of the thirty-five chapters in the post-1898 versions, there are only nine in the earlier manuscript, all in Part II 'Discussion' but none in Part I 'Introduction'.<sup>77</sup> The preface is slightly shortened, although the date 15 October 1896 is left unaltered.<sup>78</sup> The brief translational notes are significantly expanded into an

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III, pp. 520-22.

<sup>75</sup> Wu Rulun, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu', 20 March 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1561-62. Wu mentioned in the same letter that he had read part of Yan's manuscript on *Yuanfu*.

<sup>76</sup> One notable example of addition is at the end of Chapter 15, Part I of the manuscript, where Yan Fu notes that 'it would be better to append a commentary here to illustrate Spencer's theme that progress in governance will check overpopulation'. Yan Fu, *Tianyanlun Huikan Sanzhong*, pp. 112. In the post-1898 editions, a lengthy chapter-end commentary is inserted here, elaborating on various Spencerian propositions, which he remarks as having a large following, including Walter Bagehot in *Physics and Politics*. Ibid, pp. 215-18.

<sup>77</sup> Wang Kefei observes that the commentaries in the 1898 version (21,000 words, accounting for almost two-fifths of the total 56,000 words) are significantly longer than those in the manuscript (6,000 words, about one-eighth of the total 46,000 words), representing his careful afterthoughts. He even claims that the commentaries mark Yan's 'real intention or inclination', though he does not specify what it is. Wang Kefei 翻譯文化史論 [On the History of Culture in Translation] (Shanghai: Waiyu Jiaoyu Chubanshe 外語教育出版社, 1997), pp. 125-27. It should be noted that a large part of that expansion actually comes from the Chinese allusions and critique that are removed from the main text of the manuscript.

<sup>78</sup> The trimming mainly concerns his association of modern Western learning to the *Classic of Changes*, probably done in response to Wu Rulun's advice against the use of analogy in the discussion



independent text entitled ‘Yi Liyan’ 譯例言 [General Remarks on Translation] dated 10 June 1898, bringing the *xin-da-ya* principles under the limelight and evolving into what becomes the most studied and quoted treatise in Chinese translation studies.<sup>79</sup> This piece represents the translator’s belated effort to rationalize on the principles of translation and, as to be examined in the next chapter, is again steeped in Confucian poetics.

Appearing before Yan’s preface and translational remarks in the 1898 Shenshiji Zhai edition is a foreword by Wu Rulun. In the field of translated literature, this piece is predominantly seen as a patron’s eulogy, and as evidence that Yan Fu consciously maneuvered his *guwen* to conform to Tongcheng poetics to impress his patron and the elite.<sup>80</sup> But it is evidently steeped in *guwen* poetics and as such, reflects that the Tongcheng master treated *Tianyanlun* as an act of Confucian literature and a piece of *dao*-oriented ancient prose. Conceivably the elite readers at whom *Tianyanlun* was

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that is to follow. Yan also changes the Chinese terms for ‘induction’ and ‘deduction’ from *neidao* 內導 [inward guide] and *waidao* 外導 [outward guide] to *neizhou* 內籀 [inward retrieve] and *waizhou* 外籀 [outward retrieve] respectively, the word *zhou* taken from Buddhist inscriptions of the Tang Dynasty. See *Cihai* 辭海 [Sea of Words Dictionary] (Shanghai: Cishu Chubanshe 辭書出版社, miniature ed. of 1979; first publ. 1936), p. 1290.

<sup>79</sup> The full version contains 1056 words.

<sup>80</sup> This view probably begins with Lu Xun, who suggested that *Tianyanlun* was rich in Tongcheng stylistics, with such smooth and graceful cadence that moved Wu Rulun to compare it to pre-Han classical prose. Lu Xun, ‘Lu Xin Gei Qu Qiubai De Huixin’ 魯迅給瞿秋白的回信 [Lu Xun’s Reply Letter to Qu Qiubai], 28 December, 1931, in *Essays on Translation* = 翻譯論集, ed. by C. C. Liu (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1981), pp. 11-18. Lu Xun also opined that *Tianyanlun* was Yan’s most accessible translation and criticized that his other translations, especially that of *A System of Logic* and *On Liberty*, were almost unintelligible. Lu Xu apparently read Yan’s writing and his translation principles – faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance – from the perspective of pure literature and missed the point because Tongcheng *guwen* was much more than stylistics. Besides, Lu Xun remarked that Yan ‘evidently’ consulted the model of sutra translation, though he did not offer any

targeted would feel the same. In his foreword dated May/June 1898, Wu begins with a brief introduction to evolution and Huxley, telling readers that Huxley appeals for human endeavour and social progress to combat the struggle for existence in the state of nature.<sup>81</sup> He generalizes that both the cosmic process and human governance can be ascribed to evolution and remarks that it serves as a reference for people engaged in governance, a view more pertinent to Yan Fu than Huxley. Nevertheless Wu asserts that it is through 'Yan's strength in *wen*' that the main ideas of Huxley's work, being both sincere (*xin*) 信 and beautiful (*mei*) 美, shine through and that Yan's translation of Western works is unsurpassable. In other words, sincerity, beauty and a suitable political function should be reasonable justification for Yan's seemingly manipulative strategies.

Then Wu attempts to foreground Yan's literary feat through a historical review of learning and literature in the Confucian tradition in three paragraphs. He begins with a categorical statement: Regarding the sages' discourses on moral teaching (*jiao*) 教, supreme works are paramount in terms of both *dao* and *wen*; next come those less excellent in *dao* but whose *wen* can last for long, whereas a deficiency in *wen* would render *dao* groundless and rickety. Here *wen* refers to civil grace (including artistic form and rhetoric) that is invariably the corollary of *dao*. Wu goes on to give concrete examples to illustrate the standard of Confucian literature. The six great classics belong to the finest category. Since late Zhou, the representative figures of various schools of thought have left behind a legacy of excellent texts, primarily in the form of expository writing and anthology. Expository writing, stemming from the *Classic*

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substantiation.

<sup>81</sup> See Wu Rulun's foreword to *Tianyanlun*, in Yan Fu, *Tianyanlun* (Zhengzhou), pp. 1-3.



of *Changes* and *Spring and Autumn Annals* and prevalent in the Han Dynasty, is similar to planting a tree, which then leaves and flourishes. On this category, Wu cites two examples: *Historical Records*, the best Han expository prose, modelled on *Spring and Autumn Annals*; and Yang Xiong's *Great Mystery*, imitating the *Classic of Changes* and elucidating on the cosmic process.<sup>82</sup> By anthology, he means a collection of independent texts with varied themes, originating from the *Classic of Songs* and the *Classic of Documents*, and has proliferated since the mid-Tang and Song Dynasties, with Han Yu's essays being exemplars.

According to Wu, ever since the prevalence of the anthological genre, occasional expository writings are usually deficient in *wen*, which renders them inadequate for the elucidation of ideas and thus not eligible as true works of literature. After this long foregrounding of *guwen* standards, Wu goes on to plot translated literature in the Confucian literary grid. He argues that modern Western works are comparable to Han expository writing in full bloom and the contemporary climate is favourable to the translation of Western knowledge for enlightenment. Nevertheless, he regrets that most contemporary translators fail to transpose the message of the source text for they are inferior in both knowledge and *wen*, and expertise in *wen* remains essential for all genres, whether expository writing or anthology. Whatever *xue*, or learning, current literati can boast is no more than *bagu* writing and documentary or fictional writing, which is hardly *wenxue* at all. This lack of *wen* would render the translation of new

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<sup>82</sup> *Historical Records* 史記 (*Shiji*), written by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145-c. 86 BC), astronomer, historian and calendar expert, sets the norm for dynastic histories and classical narrative prose of subsequent ages. See De Bary and Bloom, I, pp. 368-72. *Great Mystery* 太玄 (*Taixuan*), written by Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BC-AD 18), renowned philosopher, philologist and writer of parallel prose, is a syncretism of Taoist metaphysics and Confucian ethics. See Chan Wing-tsit, *A Sourcebook in Chinese*

knowledge from the West despicable to the learned and as such defeat the purpose of enlightenment. Wu then gives this definitive statement: with a person as adept in *wen* as Yan Fu, one can talk about translation.

The monoglot master seems sensitive to the relative status of the source and target systems when he goes on to reason that Chinese learning, contrary to Western learning, is then in the doldrums, while at the time of the introduction of Buddhism, indigenous learning was still dominant and translators were able to record (the interpretation by foreign monks) in coherent language in an extraneous manner. He goes further to weigh Huxley by indigenous literature standards, doubting whether his *dao* alone can rival Buddhist literature, not to mention *Historical Records* or *Great Mystery*, or even the ancient prose of the Tang and Song masters. However, he asserts, Yan's writing (he uses *wen* as a transitive verb) raises the status of Huxley to be on a par with the philosophical prose of the late Zhou period before the third century BC, leading on to this rhetorical question: So isn't *wen* important? He reckons that Yan translates this book not merely to boast about his *wen*, but also because he thinks Huxley's meaningful and monitory discourse on man's checking the cosmic process and safeguarding the race through progressive governance reminds his readers of the necessity for reform and is beneficial to governance. He concludes that the translator's warning offers constructive discussion of national issues.

Wu's discussion of *wen* and *dao* would have appeared irrelevant without the former discussion of the Chinese literary tradition. Wu was actually suggesting that Yan's primary goal of translation was a practice of *wen*. Alerting his readers to the



imminence of racial elimination and the need for reform was an important but secondary intention, though it has probably been perceived as primary by the majority of Yan's readers. Besides, Wu was manipulating the source text just like his mentee, equating society to polity, and society in general to a specific (Chinese) race, twisting the ethical process into orderly governance and ascribing it to cosmic evolution, which according to Huxley should be a rival instead of a product of the cosmic process. This probably stemmed from his inability to read the source work, so that he could only rely on Yan's presumptive discourse, a fact that did not, however, seem to have disturbed him since he apparently agreed with what Yan, rather than Huxley, put forward. Establishing the sincere intention of the foreign author and a pertaining socio-political function, particularly through recommendation by a Tongcheng master, was essential to recognition of a foreign work.

Wu's foreword should not be taken as simple complimentary review. It is clear that he tried to gauge translated literature and foreign learning by Confucian *wenxue* and Tongcheng *guwen* standards. His primary concern was not the meaning of *Evolution and Ethics* that Huxley intended, but rather how the intrinsic qualities of the foreign work could be enculturated to contribute to the attainment of *dao*, and to work in such a way that *wen* naturally flowed and dovetailed with *dao*. This laborious norm, required of any decorous writing as of translation, was in his opinion attained only by Yan Fu, so well attained in fact that the status of the source text in the target literary system was raised by the poetics of the translation. Both Wu's foreword and Yan's preface reflects the paramount importance of sincerity and substance in mainstream literary theory, testified also in Tongcheng *guwen* and hence the translation poetics of Yan Fu. *Dao* necessitates *wen* and *wen* exemplifies *dao*, and the highest Confucian

ideal of cosmic harmony paralleled by social and political harmony on earth is facilitated when the two are dovetailed. 'True' works of *wenxue* and Tongcheng *guwen* are repository of the *dao*.

It must be remembered that *guwen* is a much more pregnant concept than classical Chinese, or *wenyan* 文言 [literary language]. The latter usually signifies an archaic written code now replaced by the modern vernacular, or *baihua* 白話 [plain language], while *guwen* refers to classical prose that is intrinsically *dao*-oriented and, especially for Tongcheng *guwen*, has stringent rules concerning decorum in both form and content.<sup>83</sup> The concept itself is so culturally loaded that any simple reading will fail to do it full justice. The point here is that modern readers must be careful not to interpret or judge the past by current standards or perspectives, however difficult that may be. Similarly, Yan's three translation principles should also be interpreted through Tongcheng *guwen* and Confucian *wenxue* poetics.

Wu did not mention Yan's analogy in his foreword to *Tianyanlun*. He had suggested in a letter that Yan should trim indigenous allusions and adopt a different 'manner' in translation. This is generally interpreted as his argument for faithfulness to the source text, even though his ensuing remarks do not tally. In the same letter, he remarked that his opinions were 'unworthy' and asserted that *Tianyanlun*, being 'deep and recondite', paralleled the kind of subtle satire characteristic of the 'Smaller Odes' in the *Classic*

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<sup>83</sup> By this standard, popular novels prevalent in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, such as *A Dream of Red Chamber* and *Journey to the West* would qualify as *baihua* rather than *guwen* or even *wenyan* literature, since they contain colloquial and vulgar expressions.



of *Songs*.<sup>84</sup> The satire was conceivably directed against the stubborn and ignorant rulers and literati who were against change, and Wu was again gauging *Tianyanlun* by *wenxue* poetics. Thus it is interesting to note that while the Tongcheng master advised his mentee against intercultural analogizing, he showed no reservation in doing the same in his foreword and letters. Another example comes from his comments on Yan's translation of the *Wealth of Nations*. He reckoned that Yan's *wen* could adequately represent Smith's subtle exposition, and that his frequent correction of Smith's errors and relating the work to current situations were relevant and remarkable.<sup>85</sup> Had he prescribed faithfulness to the original text as a standard of translation, this would have contravened his own standard.

In a separate letter in response to Yan's enquiry on translation methods in 1899, after the extensive launching of *Tianyanlun*, Wu again repeated the need for the invention of a unique manner for translating foreign works, as earlier translators had done with incoming Buddhist scriptures in the Northern and Southern Dynasties.<sup>86</sup> Imagining that Chinese and European languages were not the same, he deemed it desirable to adopt a manner different from that of indigenous literature or that of foreign Buddhist literature. However, he went on to conjecture, inconsistent with his previous views,

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<sup>84</sup> Wu Rulun, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu', 9 March 1897, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1560-61. The *Classic of Songs*, the oldest preserved collection of Chinese poetry, consists of 305 poems dated between c. 1000 and c. 600 BC and is alledged to have been collected by Confucius. It has three main sections: *guofeng* 國風, 160 folk tunes from 15 states about various aspects of contemporary life; *xiaoya* 小雅, 74 smaller odes and *daya* 大雅, 31 greater odes, mainly connected with the higher reaches of society; *song* 頌, 40 hymns of praise concerning religious rites, feasts or musical performances. Besides reflecting facets of the society and politics, the poems are sometimes interpreted as political statements. See Michael Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts. A Bibliography Guide* (Berkely: Society for the Study of Early China & Institue of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993), pp. 415-23.

<sup>85</sup> Wu Rulun, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu', 23 August 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1562-63.

that preservation of the immanent manner of the foreign work with some adjustment in wording might suffice, and that the eloquent Yan, he was confident, should be able to shape his own ‘archaic’ manner. Wu’s term for manner, *tizhi* 體制 [system], represents a vague signification in writing; here, it can mean generic form or stylistics.

It is indeed interesting that the monoglot literary master should offer comments on translation. But it is hardly surprising that he chose the model of sutra translation as his reference, for there had only been two translation movements before his time so far. Translated Christian and scientific literature since the sixteenth century only assumed peripheral status in the Chinese literary system, while translated Buddhist literature enjoyed the status of primary literature even in his days. Besides, it must be pointed out that while Wu had proposed earlier not to follow the manner, in other words, textual grid of indigenous literature – and provided no clue how this should be done – his use of two-to-three-character chapter headings actually followed the textual grid of indigenous classics, such as *The Analects* of Confucius, the Daoist canon *Zhuangzi* and the first monumental Chinese work on literary criticism, *Wenxin Diaolong*.<sup>87</sup>

The above suggestion should offer a new perspective to the study of Yan Fu’s

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<sup>86</sup> Wu Rulun, ‘Zhi Yan Fu Shu’, 3 April 1899, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1564-65.

<sup>87</sup> *Wenxin Diaolong* 文心雕龍 [The Literary Mind and Carving of Dragons], compiled by Liu Xie 劉勰 (c. 465- c. 522), regarded generally as the first and arguably the most comprehensive Chinese work on literary criticism, examines the genre, subject matter, form and style of traditional literature up to the author’s time and provides the author’s guide to good composition. This work is steeped in Confucian poetics, with the first few chapters stating that literary works have been and should be geared to the Confucian *dao*, the teaching of the sages and the canon of the classics.



translations. He had thought that the most veracious discourse ought to be delivered in pre-Han *guwen*, a taste even more puritanical than the Tang and Song *guwen* advocated by his Tongcheng school. Wu Rulun seems to have noticed this, for he remarked in his foreword to *Tianyanlun* that Yan Fu probably had to ‘wait’ for his intention and for what he considered to be ‘durable’ and ‘supreme’ pre-Han *guwen* to be understood, since contemporary scholars could only handle current prose, official documents and fiction.<sup>88</sup> It is indeed curious why Yan Fu had not known better than to match his narration of a new *dao* by concomitant new ways of manifestation, or *wen*, given his faith in *dao* and *wen* as one. While it is reasonable to attribute this to a need for conforming to the taste of the literati in power and the fact that he acquired *guwen* in his formative years, it remains puzzling why a foreign returned graduate and an ardent admirer of social Darwinism should insist on pre-Han poetics, which even Wu Rulun considered rather exclusive for the elite. A probable reason is that the ultimate concern of the reformer remained tied to the pristine values and cosmological concerns of the Confucian tradition predominantly narrated in pre-Han literature, so that the practical concern for accessibility remained secondary. Given his existential prejudice to follow the Confucian *wenxue* tradition, and the continued association of *baihua* with popular literature for the uneducated, it was beyond his horizon that *baihua* could be relevant at all to the *dao*.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Yan Fu, *Tianyanlun* (Zhongshou), p. 3. Wu concluded that by the time Yan met his sympathizers, the peoples’ intellect would have been raised, possibly bearing witness to Huxley’s proposition on social evolutionary progress.

<sup>89</sup> In a letter to his mentee, Yan remarked that *baihua* could not express sophisticated thought or delicate situations. He opined that the use of *baihua* represented a retrogression in learning and its current tide would soon fade out in the evolutionary process. Yan Fu, ‘Yu Xiong Chunru Shu’ 與熊純如書 [Letter to Xiong Chunru], 1919, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 698-700.

Yan Fu had targeted his printed translations at scholar-officials with whom he believed the future hope of the country lay, given his existential experience as a thwarted scholar of 'new' learning in a millennia-old feudal state. But the majority of his readers, who were in fact a younger generation without a full classical education, chose to behold the new values in his interpretation but saw his *guwen* as nothing more than abstruse language or prudish stylistics, failing to appreciate its immanent decorum. Yan often expressed concern about his readers' ignorance and lamented that it was difficult to communicate with 'those who don't understand', that he could only share his thoughts with 'those who understand'.<sup>90</sup> Liang Qichao was among those who did not understand.<sup>91</sup> He considered Yan's *guwen* 'flauntingly inaccessible', even though he greatly admired his remarkable achievement.<sup>92</sup> In defence, Yan Fu

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<sup>90</sup> For instance, in a letter to Commercial Press editor Zhang Yuanji, Yan Fu remarked that he had already made painstaking efforts to make his translations readable, but due to the extremely difficult nature of the concepts involved, it was still hard sometimes to make it readily comprehensible to the reader, even though he had already come up with three drafts on the most difficult sections. See 'Yu Zhang Yuanji Shu', 5 April 1899, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 526-530 (p. 527). Besides, in the translational remarks on his translation of *On Liberty*, he complained readers did not understand that the difficulty of the text lay in the ideas of Mill's work and had nothing to do with his language. Yan Fu, *Qunji Quanjie Lun*, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> Hu Shi notes that Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong were all 'mutants' of the Tongcheng stream, given its mainstream status in later Qing. They came under the influence of *guwen* when they were young, but they were more inclined to its elaborate stylistics rather than its stringent code regarding substance and decorum. Hu Shi, 'Wushinian Lai Zhongguo Zhi Wenxue' 五十年來中國之文學 [Chinese Literature over the Past Fifty Years], in *Hu Shi Wencun* 胡適文存 [Essays by Hu Shi], 4 vols. (Taipei: Yuandong Tushu Gongsi 遠東圖書公司, 1979; first publ. 1922), II, pp. 180-260 (pp. 202-08).

<sup>92</sup> In a newspaper review of Yan's translation of the *Wealth of Nations*, Liang Qichao criticized Yan's pre-Han stylistics as elaborate and difficult for students and those without a firm grasp of the classics. Liang opined that translation should help in the dissemination of 'civilized thinking' among nationals and suggested that he append bilingual glossaries and more reference materials to his translation. Liang Qichao, 'Shaojie Xinzhu Yuanfu' 紹介新著「原富」 [Introducing a New Work *Yuanfu*], 1902, in *Yan Fu Yanjiu Ziliao* 嚴復研究資料 [Research Materials on Yan Fu], ed. by Niu Yangshan 牛仰山 and



stated explicitly that his *guwen* writing was not targeted at immature students, impetuous reformers or uneducated revolutionaries and made a point on his elitist view about *wen* and *dao*.<sup>93</sup> Yan's peer Huang Zunxian seemed to understand his avoidance of the vernacular, which he too considered not good enough for the translation of abstruse subjects like Western logic, but he opined that his translation of economics warranted simpler language for easy comprehension.<sup>94</sup> Both Huang and Liang also appealed to the translator to respond to a long-awaited 'reform' and 'revolution' respectively in the field of literature.

Along a similar vein, Hu Shi, vanguard of the new culture movement that began from the mid 1910s, also clamoured for what he regarded as a long-awaited literary revolution, that is, replacing the 'dead' *guwen* language by *baihua*.<sup>95</sup> Gauging Yan

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Sun Hongni 孫鴻霓 (Fuzhou: Haixia Wenyi Chubanshe 海峽文藝出版社, 1990), pp. 266-68. Seeing that *Yuanfu* was the only book available on economics at that time, Liang wrote a short essay on the evolution of the subject as a 'reader' of *Yuanfu*. See Liang Qichao, 'Shengjixue Xueshuo Yange Xiaoshi' 生計學學說沿革小史 [A Brief History on the Development of Economics], in *Liang Qichao Quanjì* 梁啟超全集 [Complete Works of Liang Qichao], 10 vols. (Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe 北京出版社, 1999), II, pp. 982-1014.

<sup>93</sup> In his reply to Liang Qichao's criticism of his abstruse stylistics, for instance, Yan reiterated that *wen* 'flew on the wings of ideas and sang through the sound of feelings', so that the most sophisticated concepts and the most proper perceptions could not be shrouded in base and vulgar talk. Again he quoted Grand Historian Sima Qian and Neo-Confucian master Han Yu as models of good writing. Yan Fu, 'Yu Liang Qichao Shu', 1902, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 515-17.

<sup>94</sup> Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲, 'Zhi Yan Fu Shu' 致嚴復書 [Letter to Yan Fu], 1902, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1571-73. In this letter, Huang, while esteeming Yan to be top-notch translator, asked Yan Fu to coin new words and employ more modern and reader-friendly stylistics and formatting in his translation. He also cited Kumarjiva as using a reformed style in his translation.

<sup>95</sup> See Hu Shi 胡適, *Baihua Wenxue Shi* 白話文學史 [A History of Vernacular Literature] (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe 岳麓書社, 1986; first publ. 1928); 'Wushinian Lai Zhongguo Zhi Wenxue'. Hu Shi opines that *guwen* could not produce 'live literature', even though it had been embalmed through the civil service examinations to serve the ruler and his subordinate elite. Tracing the development of

Fu's translations by a different standard pertaining to their era, some May Fourth writers dismissed his use of *guwen* in translation as a necessary cause of inaccuracy, inexpressiveness and unsuitability for the masses.<sup>96</sup> The new *dao* that Yan Fu narrated presented a modern international order established upon the standards of a stronger West, a post-Renaissance, post-Reformation and post-Enlightenment Other that appeared to have progressed tremendously after the abandonment of traditional institutions, decorum and poetics. Understanding that this 'evolution' had taken a few centuries' progress and being optimistic about the potential of pristine Confucian values, Yan Fu opted for gradual reform. To the younger generation, however, the Confucian tradition seemed too impotent before an imperialist Other, cultivation for the sake of oneself and for the fusion of *wen* and *dao* was rendered secondary to the development of mass education and vernacular literature, and national survival became more exigent than the exclusive pursuit of cosmological harmony.

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popular literature, Hu Shi suggests that the rustic form of vernacular literature already existed in the pre-Han era and by the time of Han Dynasty, lower officials were already unable to read *guwen* decrees, so that a highly exclusive education and appointment system was developed for the grooming of Confucian elite. He traces a two-millennia history of *baihua* or vernacular history in China, which began with folk songs and ballads in the Han Dynasty, *baihua* poetry and Zen discourses starting from the Tang Dynasty, free verse *ci* poetry and *baihua* fiction beginning in the Song Dynasty, and *baihua* lyrics and drama of the Jin and Yuan Dynasties. Likening the cause of vernacular literature in China to that in post-Renaissance Europe, Hu Shi argues that *baihua* is the only legitimate medium for modern Chinese literature and declares the death of the ossified Confucian establishment together with its concomitant *guwen* literature. Despite his disapproval of *guwen*, Hu comments that Yan's translation of *Evolution and Ethics*, *On Liberty* and *The Study of Sociology*, the source texts of which were also of literary value, should enjoy a high status in *guwen* literature.

<sup>96</sup> Such writers include Qu Qiubai and Chen Xiying. See Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, 'Qu Qiubai Gei Lu Xun De Xin' 瞿秋白給魯迅的信 [Qu Qiubai's Letter to Lu Xun], 5<sup>th</sup> February 1931, in *Essays on Translation*, pp. 3-10; Chen Xiying 陳西滢, 'Lun Fanyi' 論翻譯 [On Translation], in *Fanyi Lunji* 翻譯論集 [An Anthology of Translation Theory], ed. by Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋 (Beijing: Shangwu



The 1911 Republican Revolution, the ensuing political unrest and China's humiliation at the Paris Convention served as catalysts for more violent socio-economic and ideological changes, preempting the kind of gradual progression that Yan Fu would have liked to see. The May Fourth revolutionaries saw Confucianism as belonging to a discredited past and believed China's future lay in distancing from this past, which was essentially Confucian. May Fourth writers, many of whom were also translators, advocated the composition of fiction and poetry in *baihua* and the imitation of foreign grammar and stylistics through literal translation for enrichment of the developing medium.<sup>97</sup> In other words, they attempted a literary revolution that initially counted

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Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), pp. 400-08.

<sup>97</sup> The new culture movement formally began with the launching of the journal *Qingnian* 青年 [Youth] in 1915 (renamed as *Xin Qingnian* 青年 [New Youth] in 1917), which published Chinese and translated literature in *baihua*. In 1917 and 1918, Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu released several path-breaking treatises on their proposed 'literary reform' and 'literary revolution', clamouring for formal adoption of 'vernacular literature' and a 'literary vernacular' through copious composition of *baihua* literature and imitation of foreign language and poetics through literal translation. With the support of the city populace, especially students of the Peking University, their cause culminated in the 1919 May Fourth Movement. It was estimated that by 1919, there were at least 400 *baihua* newspapers, in which translation played a significant role in the promotion of foreign literature and knowledge. There were even calls for the replacement of Chinese characters by romanized alphabets (the Education Bureau already studied the standardization of pronunciation in 1911 and published a list of 39 romanized phonetic alphabets). In 1920, *baihua* was officially known as Mandarin (*guoyu*) 國語 [national speech]. Lu Xun, who rendered a lot of Japanese translations into Chinese, proposed mechanical translation, or what he described as 'faithfulness at the expense of fluency', for an educated readership, though it is thought-provoking that he said simultaneously that a slightly educated readership would require 'rewriting' and best, 'creation', while the illiterate would not constitute a 'readership' and should be enlightened instead through picture, lecture, drama and film. See Lu Xun, 'Lu Xun He Qu Qiubai Guanyu Fanyi De Tongxin' 魯迅和瞿秋白關於翻譯的通信 [Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai's Exchange of Letters on Translation], 1931-1932, in *Essays on Translation*, pp. 3-31 (pp. 12-13). Lu Xun, who believed that literature and literary translation could change temperament and reform the society, also mentioned that his literal translation of foreign fiction into literary Chinese in 1909 was 'dull and blunt' with deficiencies. Lu Xu, "'Yüwai Xiaoshuoji" Xu' "域外小說集"序 [Preface to *An Anthology of Foreign Fiction*], 1920, in *Lu Xun QuANJI* 魯迅全集 [Complete Works of

on imitating the poetics of a stronger Other, an Other whose thinking Yan Fu had so laboriously introduced.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps the greatest trick that history played with Yan Fu is that while his hybridized evolutionary discourse became a highly productive force in the Chinese conceptual grid, his Confucian poetics ceased to be a productive force in the indigenous textual grid and was eventually eliminated in an evolutionary struggle with the new education system and the new world view that he himself had helped to forge.

It is indeed a great pity that Yan Fu had overestimated the durability of the Confucian canon at a time when the indigenous system was experiencing a crisis.<sup>99</sup> It is indeed tempting to conjecture what could have happened if Yan Fu the *dao*-seeker had chosen the 'vulgar' but more accessible vernacular for reformation of his Confucian faith, just as Martin Luther and other pioneers translated the Bible into European vernaculars.<sup>100</sup> Yan was probably caught between his desire to transmit the *dao* and

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Lu Xun], 16 vols. (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1981), X, pp.161-63.

<sup>98</sup> It is worth pointing out that *baihua* was far from developed at that time and Hu Shi observed that some contemporary intellectuals who translated works in *baihua* for the masses still produced literature in *guwen*. See Hu Shi, *Baihua Wenxue Shi*. Pioneer vernacular writers were more ready to try new poetics in translation than in indigenous literature probably because readers' taste and expectation regarding translated literature tend to be less conservative. On a practical level, some writers found it easier or more welcomed to compose or translate in *wenyan*. Even Lu Xun for instance, said he found it necessary to blend classical expressions into an early vernacular translation for the sake of flow and concision; he also 'eclipsed and changed certain parts' that were insipid and did not suit Chinese readers. Lu Xun, "'Yuejie Luxing" Bianyan' "月界旅行"辨言 [Remarks on the Translation of *De la terre a la lune*], 1903, in *Lu Xun QuANJI*, X, pp. 151-53.

<sup>99</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar theorizes that when an ossified and dying literary polysystem is unstable, any crisis will threaten the survival of the existing repertoire and may eventually lead to disaster. Itamar Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies* [= *Poetics Today*, 11:1] (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 25-26.

<sup>100</sup> It is worthwhile to note that contemporary critic Hou Yunhui, in a critique on economics, suggests



the obligation to narrate this changing *dao* in an exclusive language held to be inseparable from the *dao*. He held pre-Han *guwen* to be the only legitimate language to transmit the *dao* as illustrated by ancient sage-kings. Dialectically speaking, the perpetual evolution of the *dao* would engender immanent changes in *wen*, or traces of virtue, and warrant a change in language. While Yan Fu remained faithful to the ancients just as Confucius, he overlooked the fact that the hybridized conceptual grid he had helped to construct probably required corresponding changes in the indigenous textual grid, a newer narrative language. In other words, his attempted reformation of the Confucian tradition through intellectual critique was not matched by a corresponding reformation of Confucian poetics in narrating the *dao*. Examining translation as a metaphor of narrative reveals a significant function of translation and releases Yan Fu's historical transmission to its ontological logos, and let it speak, and hopefully, let it show the way to the inheritance of traditional Chinese culture in the modern world.

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that Yan Fu was probably the first Chinese to be conversant in Western economics, and had he employed more accessible language like Liang Qichao, and had his readers had a better sense of vision, the impact of *Yuanfu* on Chinese economic theory at his time would have been much greater. Hou Yunhui 侯運輝, 'Zhanzai Juren De Jianshang' 站在巨人的肩上 [Standing on the Shoulder of Giants], <http://www.infowide.com.hk/newpage18.htm>

## Chapter 5

### Translation as a Cosmological Act: Hermeneutical Interpretation of the *Xin-da-ya* Translation Principles

Here more than anywhere else, synchronic and diachronic diversity notwithstanding, every language embodies a single system of concepts whose contiguous, connective, and complementary relationships form a single whole, individual parts of which can never correspond to individual parts of other systems – not even, perhaps, God and To Be, the primordial noun and verb. For even universals, no matter how far they lie beyond the realm of particulars, are illumined and coloured by language.<sup>1</sup>

It has been argued that for Yan Fu, any reference to faithfulness to the source text serves more as an apologetic than a conscious claim to translation standard. Close reading of his letters, translation prefaces and translational remarks alongside the Confucian conceptual grid shows that his words, deeds and translations should be interpreted as acts of Confucian literature. *Tianyanlun* had been intended for exclusive academic discussion and his other translations were meant for an elite readership, with the source text as a point of departure for the translator's own critique on the subject matter, hoping that rapport from his readers would strengthen his cause to narrate and reform the *dao*. Yet in the field of translated literature, his translations and translation principles are usually studied as pure literary objects, his translations being gauged by the standard of 'faithfulness' to the source text and thus defined as unfaithful rewriting due to exigencies. Recent relevant findings from other fields, such as intellectual history, have not been utilized and the deeper philosophy underlying his *dao*-seeking translation project and its implication to translation remains unobserved.

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<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher, Friedrich, 'On the Different Methods of Translating', in *Western Translation Theory*,



In a topical study of the *xin-da-ya* principles in commemoration of the centennial of their release, Shen Suru shows that the principles form a paradigm dominating mainstream translation theory and practice; he also summarizes the consensus that Yan's three principles should mean something like faithfulness to the source text, comprehensibility of the target text and elegant language, no matter whether people agree with these standards or whether they have subsequently offered 'modified versions' of the three principles.<sup>2</sup> Such a 'consensus' has been generating problems and contradictions. For instance, faithfulness and comprehensibility, comprehensibility and elegant language form two ready dichotomies. Many critics have thus sought to redefine Yan Fu's criterion for elegant language, pre-Han *guwen*, as effective language; and some have tried to qualify the scope, depth and requirement of faithfulness, justifying it as an unattainable ideal that can be flexibly discarded under 'exceptional' circumstances such as the existence of a special purpose, context or readership.<sup>3</sup> Such justification certainly poses a challenge to the generality and

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ed. by Douglas Robinson, pp. 225-38 (p. 236).

<sup>2</sup> Shen's specific work provides the most comprehensive summary of past critiques of Yan Fu's *xin-da-ya* principles up to the 1990s, outlining more than a hundred comments under three categories of stance: affirmative (more than fifty), conditional affirmative with tentative amendment of the principles (twenty-six), and negative (twenty-four). He states that the *xin-da-ya* translation standards have all along occupied a central role in the study of translation in China, and identifies three apexes in associated studies: 1920s-30s, 1950s, 1980s. Summarizing past interpretations, Shen concludes that *xin* 'evidently focuses on faithfulness to the original text, though there are different opinions as to the dimension, depth and requirement of faithfulness'. *Da* means 'expressing adequately the content (meaning, information, spirit, style, etc.) of the original text so that readers of the translation can fully understand the original meaning'. *Ya* means paying attention to 'rhetoric, literary charm, elegance and decorum, gaining recognition from one's intended readership'. Shen Suru 沈蘇儒, *On "Xin, Da, Ya" – The Chinese Principles of Translating* = 論信達雅—嚴復翻譯理論研究 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1998), especially pp. 46-47, 243-58.

<sup>3</sup> Such critiques abound in translation anthologies and journals. Recent examples include: Huang Wenfan 黃文範, 'The Three Principles of Translation' = 信達雅一百年, *Studies of Interpretation and*

thus validity of a paradigm. Some researchers have tried to distance themselves from *xin-da-ya* as translation standards and reread Yan's theory and practice applying Western translation tenets, such as poetics, patronage, ideology, polysystem theory, and source-and-target-system rivalry.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless there has been unease and uncertainty about the future direction of translation research in China. Some critics worry that studies on Yan's translation

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*Translation* = 翻譯學研究集刊, 2 (1997), 91-110; Huang Zhonglian 黃忠廉, Chongshi Yan Fu De Fanyi Sixiang 重識嚴復的翻譯思想 [Reinterpreting Yan Fu's Thinking on Translation], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 2 (1988), 6-8; Jin Di 金隄, 'On Poetic Charm: The Dialectics of Xin, Da, Ya' = 神韻論 – “信、達、雅”的矛盾統一, in *Conference on Translation: Studies in Translating into Chinese* = 外文中譯研究與探討, ed. by Serena Jin (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1998), pp. 311-26; Wu Cunwen 吳存文, 'Lun "Xin, Da, Ya" De Youji Wanzheng Xing' 論“信達雅”的有機完整性 [On "Xin, Da, Ya" as an Organic Whole], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 5 (1997), 39-41; Xu, Jun 許鈞, 'Yixue Tansuo De Bainian Huigu Yu Zhanwang – Ping Lun Xin, Da, Ya – Yan Fu Fanyi Lilun Yanjiu' 譯學探索的百年回顧與展望 – 評“論信達雅—嚴復翻譯理論研究” [A Hundred Years of Translation Studies in Review and Prospect – Review of On "Xin, Da, Ya" – The Chinese Principles of Translating], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 4 (1999), 47-49.

<sup>4</sup> Recent examples include: Elsie Kit-ying Chan, 'Translation Principles and the Translator's Agenda: A Systemic Approach to Yan Fu', in *Crosscultural Transgressions: Research Models in Translation Studies II. Historical and Ideological Issues*, ed. by Theo Hermans (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2002), pp. 61-75, 'A Historical and Polysystemic Study of Yan Fu's Translation' = 以史為綱，多元互通 – 嚴復翻譯之系統研究, *Chung Wai Literary Monthly* = 中外文學, 30 (2001), 3: 7-62; Zhang Nanfeng 張南峰, 'An Applied Discipline Obsessed with "Loyalty" – On the Chinese Tradition of Translation Studies' = 以「忠實」為目標的應用翻譯學, *Journal of Translation Studies* = 翻譯學報, 2 (1998), 29-41; Wang Hongzhi 王宏志, 'Chongshi "Xin, Da, Ya" - Lun Yan Fu De Fanyi Lilun' 重釋“信、達、雅” – 論嚴復的翻譯理論 [Reinterpreting "Xin, Da, Ya" - On Yan Fu's Translation Theories], in *Chongshi "Xin, Da, Ya" - Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Fanyi Yanjiu* 重釋“信、達、雅” – 二十世紀中國翻譯研究 [Reinterpreting "Xin, Da, Ya" - Translation Studies in China in the Twentieth Century] (Shanghai: Dongfang Chubun Zhongxin 東方出版中心, 1999), pp. 79-111. André Lefevere's views on poetics, ideology and patronage and Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, in particular, are applied in these articles. Lefevere, André (ed.), *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1992); Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', *Poetics*



principles have been turning round recurrent arguments, lacking in depth and new perspectives.<sup>5</sup> There is also concern that this has hampered the development of translation studies in China.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, some think that Western theories may not fit the Chinese context and urge an eclectic approach for the establishment of a translation discipline 'with Chinese characteristics', whilst some are concerned that negating Yan Fu's tripartite principles, so far hallowed as the epitome of Chinese translation theories, would invalidate previous studies.<sup>7</sup> It is not the intention of this

*Today*, 11:1 [=Polysystem Studies] (1990), 45-51.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Huang Xuanfan 黃宜範, *Fanyi Yu Yuyi Zhijian* 翻譯與語意之間 [Between Translation and Semantic Meaning] (Taipei: Jinglian 經聯, 1976); Zhou Zhaoxiang 周兆祥, 'Fanyi De Biaozhun Yu Zhunze' 翻譯的標準與準則 [Standards and Norms of Translation], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 3 (1986), 46-50; Qian Yucai 錢育才, 'Fanyi De Shizhi He Renwu' 翻譯的實質和任務 [The Essence and Task of Translation], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 1 (1986), 9-13.

<sup>6</sup> Dian Xing, for instance, criticizes that the *xin-da-ya* proposition, being inadequate, unscientific and in practice nothing more than beautiful free translation, has hindered the advancement of translation standard and translator training, that subsequent attempts to resuscitate these propositions are doomed to fail, and that there are no absolute or inviolable standards regarding accuracy in translation. Dian Xing 殿興, 'Xin, Da, Ya Yu Fanyi Zhunquexin De Biaozhun' 信達雅與翻譯準確性的標準 [Xin, Da, Ya and the Standard of Accuracy in Translation], in *Fanyi Lunji* 翻譯論集 [An Anthology of Translation Theory], ed. by Luo Xinzhang 羅新璋 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), pp. 605-12. Tan Zaixi remarks that the 'consecration' of Yan's centennial translation standards out of context is a rare phenomenon in world translation history and that such a strange thing can only occur in a time-space where people blindly follow old rules and authority. Tan Zaixi 譚載喜, 'Bixu Jianli Fanyixue' 必須建立翻譯學 [The Necessity of Establishing Translation as a Discipline], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 3 (1987), 2-7. Wang Dongfeng complains that past discourses on translation in China were discursive, simplistic, uncreative, unscientific, impressionistic, unsystematic and skill-based, that there has not been any 'real' theory at all, and that as a result, Chinese translation studies are less sophisticated than the West. Wang Dongfeng 王東風, 'Zhongguo Fanyi Yanjiu: Shijimo De Sikao' 中國翻譯研究：世紀末的思考 [Chinese Translation Studies: Century-end Contemplation], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 1999, 1 : 7-11 ; 2 : 21-23.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Huang Bangjie 黃邦傑, 'Fanyi Yanjiu De Luxiang' 翻譯研究的路向 [Orientations in Translation Research], in *Fanyi Xin Lunji* 翻譯新論集 [New Essays on Translation], ed. by Liu Jingzhi 劉靖之 (Hong Kong: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1991), pp. 70-81; Liu

thesis to argue for or against any of these stances. My interest in Yan Fu stems mainly from his contribution to Chinese intellectual history and his attempted narration and reformation of the Confucian *dao* through translation, the legacy of which, I believe, has not been fully recognized. While I have no intention to valorize Yan Fu's achievement, it is exhilarating nonetheless to perceive ample new research perspectives from his translation project, necessitating the historicizing of theory and practice which can help to minimize existential value judgement and which points at a new research direction for the development of what is perhaps the most important paradigm in Chinese translation studies.<sup>8</sup> The Confucian tradition examined in the previous chapters suggests that a new methodology is required for portrayal of the deeper implications of Yan Fu's translation paradigm.

In this connection, it is worthwhile to discuss Wang Zuoliang's much-quoted remarks about Yan Fu. Wang hints that Yan Fu's understanding of the West is 'perhaps far deeper than what we have recognized', the significance of his translations and his goals are 'perhaps greater than what we have realized' and 'the translation method he adopted might possess broader implications'.<sup>9</sup> Wang does not offer much

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Miqing 劉宓慶, 'Zhongguo Xiandai Fanyi Lilun Jianshe Chuyi' 中國現代翻譯理論建設芻議 [Humble Opinion on Constructing Modern Chinese Translation Theory], in *Zhongguo Yuwen Tongxin* 中國語文通訊 [Chinese Language Journal], 14 (1991), 11-16, 21; Xu Yuanchong 許淵沖, 'Yixue Yao Ganwei Tianxia Xian' 譯學要敢為天下先 [Dare to be the First in Translation Studies], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 2 (1999), 4-9; Hu Qingping 胡清平, 'Chengqing Fanyi Lilun Yanjiu Zhong De Jige Wenti' 澄清翻譯理論研究中的幾個問題 [Clarification on Certain Questions in Translation Studies], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 5 (1999), 2-5.

<sup>8</sup> See also Chan Elsie Kit-ying 陳潔瑩, 'Tradition and Mediation: The Prospect of Translation Studies in China in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' = 繼往開來, 融通中西 — 廿一世紀中國翻譯研究展望, *Translation Quarterly* = 翻譯季刊, 15 (2000), 51-74

<sup>9</sup> Wang Zuoliang 王佐良, 'Yan Fu De Yongxin' 嚴復的用心 [Yan Fu's Intention], in *Lun Yan Fu Yu*



substantiation, apart from arguing that Yan had ‘intended’ to be faithful to the source text but was obliged to ‘sugarcoat’ his translation with inaccessible *guwen* to appeal to the exclusive taste of the Sinocentric elite in power. His failure to substantiate his intuition or sixth sense stems mainly from the fact that, just like so many critics, he sees *xin-da-ya* as pure literary propositions and *a priori* standards of translation and tries to match Yan’s ‘intention’ with that of the source text author, which is indeed ironical, for even the translator himself had no control over how his ‘original intention’ was perceived by his readers and critics. Yan’s translations and remarks on translation, just like so many ‘original’ compositions, seem to assume a life of their own, a life out of the inscrutable dimensions of speech and writing, sometimes called the logos, transcending authorial intent and subject to the ‘tyranny’ of readers and critics. But there is no real need to announce the death of the author, or in the case of Yan Fu, the translator, who assumes multiple identities: critic, writer, reformer, narrator, translator and seeker of the *dao*.<sup>10</sup> This chapter is an attempt to explore the logos behind Yan Fu’s translation principles through hermeneutical criticism, which can be illuminating not only for textual studies, but also for research in translation history and theory. I will study the *xin-da-ya* translation principles in relation to the Confucian exegetical tradition and endeavour to show that they constitute pregnant propositions open to multiple interpretations and need not be confined to problematic past consensus. This study also illustrates the importance of historicizing theory: any claim to past theory must be verified through textual, philological, literary or

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*Yanyi Mingzhu* 論嚴復與嚴譯名著 [On Yan Fu and His Famous Translations], ed. by Shangwu Yinshuguan Editorial Section 商務印書館編輯部 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), pp. 22-27.

<sup>10</sup> See Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), pp. 49-55. Barthes argues that the author ceases to live or

historical criticism to avoid speculation.

It must be remembered that Yan Fu only discussed the *xin-da-ya* principles once, in ‘General Remarks on Translation’ of *Tiyanlun* (hereinafter known as ‘Remarks’), dated 10 June 1898, shortly before it went to print after copious amendment upon Wu Rulun’s comments, and that the text is almost totally different from the brief translational notes attached to his 1895/6 manuscript. Before speculating whether this piece is an apologetic or a record of the meticulous afterthought of the translator, it is necessary to examine closely how Yan Fu presents his views in the text and how his thinking relates to Confucian coordinates. He begins with the following remarks:

Translation involves three requirements difficult to fulfill: *xin* (信) [faith], *da* (達) [decorum], *ya* (雅) [virtue]. *Xin* is difficult enough to attain, but *xin* at the expense of *da* would render the translation futile, so *da* is of prime importance.<sup>11</sup>

Literally, *xin* means ‘faith, trust, honesty and sincerity’, *da* ‘fluent, getting through or arriving at’, and *ya* ‘refined or proper’; the three terms can function as either nouns or adjectives. As argued in the previous chapters, Yan Fu’s prime concerns and conduct were all along guided by the highest Confucian ideals. Confucius said he remained *xin*

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function in the real world but enters a world of language and signifiers.

<sup>11</sup> See full version: ‘*Tiyanlun* Yi Liyan’ 天演論譯例言 [General Remarks on Translation of *Tiyanlun*], 10 June 1898, in *Yan Fu Ji* 嚴復集 [Works of Yan Fu], ed. by Wang Shi 王弼, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1986), V, pp. 1321-23. I will at times refer to the following English translation, which does not include the last paragraph on how *Tiyanlun* went to print: Yan Fu, ‘General Remarks on Translation’ = 天演論譯例言, trans. by C. Y. Hsu 徐兆鏞, *Renditions*, 1 (1973), 4-6. Hsu translates *xin-da-ya* as faithfulness-comprehensibility-elegance, which reflect the general understanding of Yan’s translation principles and is appended at Appendix II. In my discussion, I will transcribe Confucian terms and provide literal or contextual renderings in brackets in order to reflect the cultural and contextual implications of such loaded terms.



(faithful) to the ancients and delivered *xin* by narrating the *dao* as exemplified by sage-kings. This tradition, according to Ren Jiyu, has been transmitted for millennia through presumptive or even manipulative exegetical discourse. Hence the ‘object’ of *xin* concerns the *dao*, rather than any individual or microscopic entity such as a text or an author. Similarly, *da* concerns letting the *dao* get through or reaching the *dao*, and *ya* or *wen* concerns adhering to Confucian virtues. In saying that ‘*xin* at the expense of *da* would render the translation futile’, Yan suggests that just claiming faithfulness to the *dao* without reaching it or letting it shine through will not make a successful translation, which is an act of *wenxue*. The *xin-da-ya* formula appears as an epigrammatic representation that is characteristic of traditional Chinese terminology.

Yan does not provide immediate explanation of the three terms, apart from cryptic quotations from Confucian classics in a later paragraph. He goes on instead to censure the ‘profusion’ of contemporary translators 象寄之才 [those who imitate and send] following China’s opening to foreign trade as failing to meet the first two standards. The reasons he gives are superficiality, partiality and lack of discrimination. He then explains that his present translation is based on Western knowledge acquired during the last fifty years and is one of the author’s later works, that his translation attempts to present its profound thought and will thus reorganize and elaborate rather than follow the exact order of words and sentences of the source text, though it does not deviate from the meaning of the source text. Yan claims that his attempt aims at *dazhi* 達旨 [convey the purport] rather than *biyi* 筆譯 [pen translation], to enable free *fahui* 發揮 [develop], and is not the *zhengfa* 正法 [standard method]. He then quotes Buddhist translator Kumaarajiva, known for his free translation, saying, ‘Whoever imitates me would fall’, and asks future translators not to use his present

work as an excuse for their failings.

Again we can discern psychological tension between the common perception that ‘standard’ or ‘pen’ translation requires ‘imitation’ and his awareness or disclaimer that neither he nor Kumaarajiva aims at this kind of translation, translation as an occupation, which is associated more with pettiness than free development of ideas or presentation of profound thought. Now that his higher learning exercise is presented to a broader readership as a translation, and his initial readers see the potential utilitarian functions of his text, the change in text usage conceivably leaves Yan torn between these two perspectives on the nature of translation, an ambivalent cognition of translation as a ‘slavish’ preoccupation ‘loyal’ to a master source text and ‘appealing’ to readers. It is not helpful to say that *Tianyanlun* ‘does not deviate’ from the meaning of *Evolution and Ethics*. All the excuses he offers appear more as an apologetic than a determined view on the ‘standard’ of ‘translation’, which is, after all, not surprising, given the blurred cognition of the role, nature and scope of translation in those days. Before the establishment of translation (studies) as a discipline, discourses on translation for the better half of the last century show a lack of distinction between the what, why and how of translation. There is of course close interconnection between the three epistemological perspectives, but it is beside the point to presume that they are one and the same. Yet the above apologetic is often interpreted as didactic indication that *xin* means ‘faithfulness’, the argument being that since Yan says his enculturating translation is not ‘the’ standard method, then ‘the standard’ must be ‘faithfulness’ to the source ‘text’.

Yan continues in the second paragraph to give an account of the differences between



Chinese and Western (especially English) syntax and its relevance to translation. Showing a grasp of typical English structures such as long subordination, embedding and modification, the translator explains that imitating the original structure might lead to odd expression in Chinese while trimming might lead to a loss in meaning. Thus a translator has to digest the *shenli* 神理 [spirit and reason] of the source text in his 'heart or mind' (心) in order to effect spontaneous articulate flow of the pen. When the *cili* 詞理 [word and reason] is profound and difficult to understand, the translator should correlate and foreground what precedes and what follows to bring out the meaning. All this effort is targeted at *da*, for the 'conduct' 爲 of *da* is equivalent to the 'conduct' of *xin*. This point is again interpreted as didactic indication that *da* means fluency or comprehensibility of the target text, and that a translator ought to strike a balance between free and literal translation to achieve *xin*, that is, faithfulness to the spirit of the original text.

Such didactic interpretation appears commonsensical, taking for granted that *xin*, *da*, *ya* are pure literary concepts. Perhaps Yan has to share the blame for his cryptic and impressionistic expression, leaving readers to speculate for over a century. It must have been beyond his imagination that the Confucian tradition was about to collapse and few would bother about *wenxue* poetics anymore. Today Yan's 'Remarks' may appear obscure and ill-organized, with twists and turns in argument.<sup>12</sup> It takes a

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<sup>12</sup> Zhu Zhiyu, for instance, comments that the first three paragraphs of Yan's 'General Remarks on Translation' are not tightly organized. The three single-character principles are raised at the beginning, while the references are given only in the third paragraph, so that the careless reader may misunderstand his intention. Zhu thinks that *xin* means faithfulness to the source text and is an important criterion of translation. Zhu Zhiyu 朱志瑜, 'The Place of "Xin-da-ya" in Chinese Translation History' = 論“信達雅”說在傳統中國翻譯理論中的位置, *Translation Quarterly* = 翻譯季刊, 15

two-paragraph stride before Yan states the whence of *xin-da-ya*, but again the surface meaning is obscure. It is ironic, though, that this piece should be subsequently studied as a conclusive or even canonized treatise on translation. In fact one of the reasons for rereading Yan's seemingly hackneyed translation principles in this thesis is to find out why, notwithstanding human folly, an otherwise outstanding intellectual, eloquent critic, far-sighted educationalist and remarkable translator should appear so superficial, inconsistent, disorganized and impressionistic in his own exposition on translation. (The only speculation forthwith would be contempt for or ignorance on the subject.) The mere association of his translation principles with pure literary coordinates, his conservative outlook and elite target readership dangerously leads to glossing equivocal points in his entire translation project.

Yan states the whence of *xin-da-ya* in the third paragraph:

The *Changes* says, '*Cheng* 誠 [faith; *cheng* is equivalent to *xin* here] is the basis of *xiuci* 修辭 [writing or achieving decorum].' Confucius says (i.e. *Analects*), 'In *ci* 辭 [speech], *da* 達 [getting through] is what matters after all.' It is also said (i.e. *Zuo's Commentary*), 'For *yan* 言 [speech] without *wen* 文 [civil virtue], the effect will not extend far.' These three things set the proper course for *wenzhang* 文章 [Confucian literature] and thus also the guidelines for translation. Therefore, besides *xin* 信 and *da* 達, *erya* 爾雅 [near proper] is required. This is not only for extending the effects. Actually, for *jingli weiyan* 精理微言 [profound reason and subtle meaning], it is easier to achieve *da* 達 by using pre-Han wording and syntax, while it will be difficult to do the same by using the modern vernacular which is *li* 利 [expedient] and *su* 俗 [vulgar], often straining the meaning to fit the word, resulting in gross misinterpretation. It is inevitable that I have to make a choice between the two, not that I have a preference for the eccentric. My present translation has been criticized for its abstruse language and involved style. But I must say this is my deliberate attempt at manifest illustration; there is nothing more



to this.<sup>13</sup>

Evidently the wording and reasoning above are steeped in Confucian *wenxue* poetics (writing and learning combined, *wen* and *dao* in one), and Yan is trying to set the same 'guidelines' or standards for *dao*-embedding literature and translation. The three cryptic quotations range from four to eight Chinese characters taken from the *Classic of Changes*, *Analects* and *Zuo's Commentary*, which form the core of the Tongcheng repertoire of study. Thus it is necessary to interpret the 'Remarks' from the perspective of Confucian and especially Tongcheng poetics, the mainstream of *guwen* prose in late Qing. It is also necessary to study the three quotations in relation to the exegetical tradition of the respective classics, for exegesis played a prime role in the Confucian tradition of self-cultivation.

In traditional Chinese cosmology, form (word or deed), meaning (thought or interpretation) and substance (nature or morality) spring from the Supreme Ultimate. The sincere pursuit of the way (*dao*) to this Ultimate is the ontological subject of the Chinese tradition, with *wenxue* (*dao*-oriented learning and literature) and exegesis being the crucial epistemological path toward understanding of this subject. The later assimilation of Daoist and Buddhist doctrines adds a metaphysical and theological perspective to this tradition. The belief that man can be at one with a primordial cause is intrinsic to all three bodies of thought, but it is particularly Confucian faith which holds that this can be achieved through positive and progressive human endeavour to grasp and mediate the changes immanent in the constant flux. This represents a serious attitude in dealing with a metaphysical issue through a connectedness to the world and forms a specific hermeneutical tradition in China. (The fossilization of

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<sup>13</sup> Yan Fu, '*Tianyanlun Yi Liyan*'; my translation.

Confucian doctrines and rituals by later rulers and scholars is a different matter.)

It must be remembered that the Chinese word for translation, *yi*, can also mean exegete, change or exchange.<sup>14</sup> The *Changes* is a major classic of the Confucian and even Daoist canons, a primordial source on the interpretation of heavenly, earthly and human signs and their underlying philosophy of life, and actually helps to shape Yan Fu's world view and guide his conduct, including translation. Conceivably, the *Changes* does not explicitly cover the practice of interlingual translation, but it has been a major element of the Confucian exegetical tradition. The primordial form of the *Changes* is a record of trigrams (three-line images) believed to be 'invented' by ancient sage-kings to trace and analogize the mysterious changes and patterns they observed of the myriad things.<sup>15</sup> The sages also carried through the changes themselves, and 'invented' various systems to be applied to the people.<sup>16</sup> Other sages

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<sup>14</sup> See chapter 4, notes 26-29.

<sup>15</sup> According to Confucius' 'Appended Phrases' 系辭, that is, narration and commentary to the *Changes* and Wang Bi's commentary on his 'Phrases', the eight fundamental trigrams were invented by Lord Bao Xi 包犧, divine semi-human being thought to have introduced cattle-breeding, fishing and hunting techniques to humans, 'in order to become thoroughly conversant with the virtues inherent in the numinous and the bright and to classify the myriad things in terms of their true, innate natures.' He then handed them down to Lord Shen Nong 神農, legendary king who introduced agriculture, and the Lord Yellow Emperor 黃帝, Lord Yao 堯 and Lord Shun 舜. The trigrams, and the combination of two trigrams to form hexagrams, encapsulate the patterns of the myriad things. See Richard John Lynn (trans.), *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 77-78. See also chapter 4, note 46.

<sup>16</sup> Confucius' 'Appended Phrases' state:

After Lord Shen Nong perished, the Lord Yellow Emperor, Lord Yao, and Lord Shun applied themselves to things. They allowed things to undergo the free flow of change and so spared the common folk from weariness and sloth...With their numinous powers they transformed things and had the common folk adapt to them. As for [the Dao of] change, when one process of it reaches its limit, a change from one state to another occurs. As such, change achieves free flow, and with this free flow, it lasts forever.



appended pithy explanatory phrases to the trigrams and laid down effective statutes and rituals accordingly to respond to the way changes and transformations operated.<sup>17</sup> Confucius and later sages endeavoured to restore this great harmony by narrating their traces of virtue and observing the appropriate rituals.<sup>18</sup> This would deny the setting of stringent norms, for Confucius believed that ‘change and consummation are represented by those entities that are in step with the moment’ and ‘change achieves free flow, and with this free flow, it lasts forever.’<sup>19</sup> And in the Confucian exegetical

Quoted from Lynn, p. 78; my ellipsis. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, pp. 298-300.

<sup>17</sup> Confucius’ ‘Appended Phrases’ to the *Changes* and Han Kangbo’s commentary state:

The sages had the means to perceive the mysteries of the world and, drawing comparisons to them with analogous things, made images out of those things that seemed appropriate...This is why these are called ‘images.’ The sages had the means to perceive the activities taking place in the world, and, observing how things come together and go smoothly, they thus enacted statutes and rituals accordingly...They appended phrases to the hexagram lines in order to judge the good and bad fortune involved...One should only speak after having drawn the appropriate comparisons [as offered in the *Changes*] and only act after having discussed what is involved. It is through such comparisons and by such discussions that one can respond successfully to the way change and transformation operate.

Quoted from Lynn, pp. 56-57; my ellipses. See also Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Zhouyi Zhengyi* 周易正義 [The Correct Meaning of *The Changes of Zhou Dynasty*] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 1999), pp. 274-75.

<sup>18</sup> The following from ‘Appended Phrases’ to the *Changes* records Confucius’ remarks on the two primary hexagrams *qian* and *kun*, which are similar to the two ends of a continuum:

*Qian* and *Kun*, do they not constitute the arcane source for change!...When *Qian* and *Kun* form ranks, change stands in their midst, but if *Qian* and *Kun* were to disintegrate, there would be no way that change could manifest itself. And if change could not manifest itself, this would mean that *Qian* and *Kun* might almost be at the point of extinction!

Therefore what is prior to physical form pertains to the Dao, and what is subsequent to physical form pertains to concrete objects [the phenomenal world]. That which transforms things and regulates them is called ‘change’...By extending this to practical action, one may be said to achieve complete success...To take up this [the Dao of change] and integrate it into the lives of the common folk of the world, this we call all ‘the great task of life.’

Quoted from Lynn, pp. 67-68; my ellipses. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, pp. 291-92.

<sup>19</sup> Lynn, pp. 76-78. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, pp. 295, 300.

tradition, this is to be achieved by noble men through ‘cultivating sincerity’ (*xiucheng*) 修誠, or faith in the Confucian *dao*.<sup>20</sup> It is no coincidence that Yan Fu’s first and most important translation principle – and the most contentious as well – *xin*, should be based on the concept of *cheng* in the *Changes*.

*Xin* is excerpted from the section ‘Wenyan’ in the *Changes*, where Confucius accounts for the traces of virtue and profound images embodied in the two primary oracular hexagrams *qian* and *kun*. In his narration of the third horizontal line from the bottom of the hexagram (i.e. at the bottom of the upper trigram and the top of the lower trigram) for *qian*, Confucius mentions the notion of *cheng*, which Yan Fu takes to mean *xin*. The relevant section runs:

The Master says, ‘The noble man fosters his virtue (*de*) (德) and cultivates (*xiu*) (修) his task (*ye*) (業). He fosters his virtue by being loyal (*zhong*) (忠) and trustworthy (*xin*) (信); he keeps his task in hand by cultivating (*xiu*) (修) his words (*ci*) (辭) and establishing (*li*) (立) his sincerity (*cheng*) (誠). A person who understands what a maximum point (i.e. at the top of the lower trigram) is and fulfills it can take part in the incipency of the moment (*ji*) (幾). A person who understands what a conclusion (i.e. at the bottom of the upper trigram) is and brings it about can take part in the preservation of righteousness (*yi*) (義).<sup>21</sup> [...] Thus when he occupies a high

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<sup>20</sup> The following from Confucius’ ‘Appended Phrases’ to the *Changes* and Han Kangbo’s commentary state the significance of cultivating sincerity:

‘A calling crane is in the shadows; its young answer it. I have a fine goblet; I will share it with you.’ {As a crane calls and its young answer, so if one cultivates sincerity, all others will respond to it. If I have a fine goblet and share it around, those I share with also will respond to me with goodness... This is why the noble man only acts in consequence of comparisons made and discussions engaged in and is someone who pays careful heed to the subtlety of things.}...

Lynn, p. 57; my ellipsis. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, p. 276.

<sup>21</sup> According to the widely-used commentary on this part by Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249), the ‘maximum point’ and ‘conclusion’ means the top line and bottom line of a trigram respectively. Understanding and reaching the maximum point of a matter, one manages to ‘avoid blame for any transgression’ and



position, he is not proud, and when he is in a low position, he is not distressed. To be at the top of the lower trigram is still to be below the upper trigram. As one understands that lowness has merely concluded, he is not proud, but as he also understands that he has reached a maximum point and fulfilled it, he is not distressed either. This is why, making earnest efforts, he takes care when the moment requires it and, though in danger, will suffer no blame (*jiu*) (咎).'<sup>22</sup>

This oracular section seems to epitomize Yan Fu's career as a Confucian translator.

From the second line of the above section stems Yan's basis of *xin*:

The *Changes* said, '*xiu* 修 *ci* 辭 *li* 立 *cheng* 誠.'

Literally, *xiuci licheng* means 'cultivating words and/or establishing sincerity'. The general interpretation of this quotation in the field of translated literature is, 'The basis of (cultivated) writing is faithfulness to the source text or author.' But it must be remembered that the notions of 'writing' and 'cultivation' in Confucian poetics imply an act of (virtuous) conduct. Contemporary scholar Nan Huaijin also stresses the importance of interpreting these terms in the pre-Han context. He reasons that *de* is an act and means 'accomplishment' on top of virtue, *ye* refers to 'skill' and 'scholastic achievement' on top of duty or task, and *xiuci* refers to achieving decorum in speech, deed, writing and all tasks, including dealing with people, things and society rather

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thus can take part in the 'accomplishment of great affairs'. Understanding and reaching the conclusion of a matter, one can bring the conclusion to 'perfect fulfillment'. For speeding up the progress of things, 'righteousness' is not as good as 'expediency', but for preserving the completion of things, 'expediency' is not as good as 'righteousness'. Lynn, p. 135.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from Lynn, p. 135; my parentheses. According to the commentary by Wang Bi, noted for his commentary on the *Classic of Changes* and the Daoist canon *Daodejing*, 'to take care' means to be alert and fearful. When one reaches the maximum point of a matter and takes care, one can take advantage of the moment and will suffer no blame even though in danger. See also James Legge's translation, without Wang's commentary. James Legge (trans.), *Book of Changes* = 周易 (Changsha:

than rhetoric or refined language.<sup>23</sup> Besides, as discussed in the last chapter, Yan Fu's *dao*-embedding *guwen* represents a much more sophisticated notion than just refined, classical or literary language. Thus the question of refined language is irrelevant to Yan's translation project (unrefined *guwen* is just unthinkable), and it is beside the point for critics to gloss over Yan's infidelity to the source text with excuses like 'this is due to his use of refined language, or *guwen*' or 'it is easier to achieve expressiveness or *da* with free translation'.<sup>24</sup>

According to the authoritative sub-commentary on the *Changes* by Kong Yingda, *ci* refers to *wen* (文) [virtue/accomplishment] and *jiao* 教 [faith/instruction], *cheng* means honesty/sincerity, and *xiuci licheng* together refers to the external cultivation of virtue/accomplishment and faith/instruction and the internal establishment of honesty/sincerity, the combined conduct of which can lead to great achievement.<sup>25</sup> Kong also says that grasping the incipency of the moment (*ji*) means entering the state of *you* 有 [lit. existence, presence, reality or material] upon leaving its

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Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1993), p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Nan Huaijin 南懷瑾 (b. 1918), *Yijing Zashuo Yu Yijing Xizhuan Biejiang* 易經雜說與易經系傳別講 [Topics on the *Classic of Changes* and Other Remarks on the 'Appended Phrases' to the *Classic of Changes*] (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe 復旦大學出版社, 2000), pp. 147-49.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Shen Suru, Wang Zuoliang. Han Dihou suggests that Yan's inadequacies are caused by the need to adjust to the needs, mainly readers, of his time, since contemporary intellectuals despised unsophisticated *guwen* writing and were ignorant of Western culture. Han Dihou 韓迪厚, *Modern English-Chinese Translation: A Critical Survey* = 近代翻譯史話 (Hong Kong: Swindon, 1969), pp. 12-13. Wang Kefei even asserts that Yan Fu's manipulative translation is an inheritance of Kumaarajiva's free translation approach fifteen hundred years ago. Wang, Kefei 王克非, 'Kumaarajiva Yu Yan Fu' 鳩摩羅什與嚴復 [Kumaarajiva and Yan Fu], *Chinese Translators' Journal* = 中國翻譯, 4 (1998), 38-39.

<sup>25</sup> Tang Dynasty scholar Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) is best remembered for his commentaries, titled 'Correct Meaning' (*zhengyi*), of the Five Classics. See Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, pp. 15-17.



continuum opposite state *wu* 無, when one obtains the reason (*li*) 理 before the form (*xing*) 形, which can speed up progress and bring expedience as a temporary means to an end; but the final completion and sustaining of achievement depends on the more difficult process of preserving righteousness (*yi*).<sup>26</sup>

Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi interprets *xiuci* as being sincere at heart (*cheng*) when fulfilling one's task, which is 'even more important' than being loyal (*zhong*) or trustworthy (*xin*) for keeping one's task in hand; the achievement of skill or academic achievement (*ye*) depends on knowing where the limits lie; he also stresses that being not proud or distressed, one will suffer no blame (in other words, the superego possesses guilt-free conscience).<sup>27</sup> Zhu Xi's emphasis on sincerity over loyalty and trustworthiness appears intriguingly dialectic. The distinction between the three codes of conduct is not readily clear, and one may ask to whom/what should the translator be sincere/loyal/trustful. In Confucian exegesis, the most 'basic' interpretation of *cheng* is 'no self-deception' (*wu ziqi*) 毋自欺, a prime factor for 'cultivation' of the self, the 'root' of all achievement, and is necessarily associated with two virtues, one being 'sincerity of thought' (*chengyi*) 誠意, following where one's 'nature' (*xing*) 性 leads.<sup>28</sup> The other is 'intelligence' (*ming*) 明, which is associated with both 'nature'

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Zhouyi Benyi* 周易本義 [The Basic Meaning of *The Changes of Zhou Dynasty*] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1987), p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Taken from the commentary on the *Great Learning* by Philosopher Zeng 曾子, disciple of Confucius:

What is meant by 'making the thoughts sincere,' is the allowing no self-deception, as when we hate a bad smell, and as when we love what is beautiful. This is called self-enjoyment. Therefore, the superior man must be watchful over himself when he is alone.

Quoted from James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese/English Four Books* = 漢英四書 (Changsha:

and 'instruction'.<sup>29</sup> Sincerity can be considered a natural quality but it is closely related to intelligence, instruction and cultivation, engendering a transforming and nourishing factor which can in turn help full development of one's neighbour, the state, heaven and earth. It is why Confucius engaged in serious research for his commentary and compilation work in discharging his *xin* and love for the Ancients.

Similarly, Yan Fu discharged his *xin* and love for the *dao* through translation, which was also based on serious study of the subject matter. As a lowly translator, he could still hope to take part in the 'accomplishment of great affairs', engaging in higher learning for the self so that he could simultaneously fulfill his obligations as a

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Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1992), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Taken from the commentary on the *Doctrine of the Mean* by Zisi 子思, grandson of Confucius who studied with Philosopher Zeng:

There is a way to the attainment of sincerity in one's self; - if a man does not understand what is good, he will not attain sincerity in himself. Sincerity is the way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of man. He who possesses sincerity, is he who, without effort, hits what is right, and apprehends, without the exercise of thought; - he is the sage who naturally and easily embodies the right way. He who attends to sincerity is he who chooses what is good, and firmly holds it fast. To this attainment there are requisite the extensive study of what is good, accurate inquiry about it, careful reflection on it, the discrimination of it, and the earnest practice of it...

When we have intelligence resulting from sincerity, this condition is to be ascribed to nature; when we have sincerity resulting from intelligence, this condition is to be ascribed to instruction. But given the sincerity, and there shall be the intelligence; given the intelligence, and there shall be the sincerity...

It is he who is possessed of the most complete sincerity that can exist under heaven, who can give its full development to his nature. Able to give its full development to his own nature, he can do the same to the nature of other men. Able to give its full development to the nature of other men, he can give their full development to the natures of animals and things. Able to give their full development to the natures of creatures and things, he can assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth. Able to assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth, he may with Heaven and Earth form a ternion.

Quoted from Legge, *The Chinese English Four Books*, pp. 47-49; my ellipsis.



member of the society and as a participant in the cosmic process. He believed in an ultimate repository of truth and virtue, a *dao* to be ‘carried through’ (*da*) via cross-cultural critique and narrative translating to reform indigenous epistemology and methodology in response to the drastically changing world. His goal was to bring across ‘profound reason and subtle meaning’ along with physical texts, and his adoption of foreign ideas was restricted to those that he deemed true and proper. Indiscriminate introduction could mean self-deception.<sup>30</sup> The major implication of *xin* for translation was that: to accomplish any task or virtue, the translator must remain faithful to the *dao* and must not deceive himself.

In his mediation between the Chinese and Western traditions, Yan operated between ‘immaterial’ conceptual grids, deciphering pure ‘reason’ (concepts) behind the ‘form’ (foreign texts), cross-examining it with indigenous concepts and encapsulating his fusion of horizons in the form of *guwen*. Enculturation was not so much for the readers, but for transmitting the *dao* and remaining faithful to it. To tap the ‘incipiency of the moment’, he had to ‘broaden his undertakings’ and extend the maximum limits of the ideas that he extracted even to the extent of ‘transgression’, hoping that he could manage ‘to avoid blame’. That is why he often sought to clarify his intentions and to assure his readers that the blame of digressing from the source text and the use of *guwen* (which younger readers found inaccessible) should not be laid on him. He explained more than once that the source text comprised a lot of

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<sup>30</sup> In the ‘Remarks’, Yan blames contemporary translators for being unable to achieve *xin* and *da* due to superficiality, partiality and a lack of discrimination. The commonsensical interpretation is that those translators lacked deep knowledge and horizon and were unable to differentiate between right and wrong. But then the inability to differentiate is already inferred by superficiality or partiality, so ‘discrimination’ seems to have a much deeper inference than its general literal interpretation, especially

abstruse topics, so that even the layman who came from the same country and spoke the same language as the author would not be able to understand much, let alone a foreigner reading a translation. He wanted to keep his readers 'alert and fearful', an intention well understood by Wu Rulun. He believed that it was easier to carry across the *dao* and achieve *da* with pre-Han *guwen*. The 'expedient' and vulgar vernacular might have been good for 'speeding up the progress of things' (like the reformers and revolutionaries inciting the mass), but it was not good enough for the completion of things (restoration of social and cosmic harmony), extending the effects of profound reason and subtle meaning far and wide. He aimed at gradual and perfect fulfillment of a national transformation without resorting to extremism or sensationalism. Such 'righteousness' could hopefully lead to 'the highest excellence' and lead people to 'the gateway through which the fitness of the *dao* operates'.<sup>31</sup>

In this connection, it is telling that Confucius should suggest contraction and expansion for the interception of 'perfect concepts' into the 'numinous' for the widest application.<sup>32</sup> The Chinese word for 'extension and expansion' is *shen* 伸, and in the

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in the light of the previous discussion on the Confucian literary tradition.

<sup>31</sup> This belief is embedded in the *Changes*:

With Heaven and Earth having their positions thus fixed, change operates in their midst. As it allows things to fulfil their natures and keep on existing, this means that change is the gateway through which the fitness of the *dao* operates.

Quoted from Lynn, p. 56. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, p. 274.

<sup>32</sup> Confucius' 'Appended Phrases' to the *Changes* and the pertaining commentary by Han Kangbo, marked within brackets, state:

Contraction and expansion (*xin*) (信) impel each other on, and benefits are generated in this process. The contraction of the measuring worm is done in order to try to stretch itself out, and the hibernation of dragons and snakes is done in order to preserve their lives. Perfect concepts [*jingyi*] (精義) come about by entrance into the numinous [*ru shen*] (入神), which, once had, allows one to extend their application to the utmost(...)The use of these applications comes about by making



*Changes*, it is used interchangeably with the word for 'faith' or 'sincerity', *xin* 信.<sup>33</sup>

The equation of extension or expansion with faith or sincerity is illuminating to translation. Just as the twisting, turning and comparison of concepts, images and languages run in corollary to pursuing one's faith, so too is the same allowed for translation; and if this is based on sincerity, it will hit the mark, letting the *dao* to be carried through.<sup>34</sup> The issue at hand was far more significant to Yan than a reader-friendly or equivalence notion. This explains why Yan should have been prone to intercultural analogy and still retained a lot of Chinese examples in *Tianyanlun* against the advice of Wu Rulun. He contracted and expanded Huxley's main representation (social progress is to be achieved by those who are ethically the best,

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one's person secure, which allows for the subsequent exaltation of his virtue. {The Dao governing how to make use of applications means that one first makes one's position secure and only after that takes action. Perfect concepts derive from 'entrance into the numinous, which, once had, allows one to extend their application to the utmost.' The use of these applications derive from their progenitor, so each and every matter springs from the root. If one returns to the root of things, he will find quiescence there and discover all the world's principles available to him. However, if he enslaves his capacity for thought and deliberation just so he can seek ways to put things to use and if he disregards the need to make his person secure just so he can sacrifice himself to achievement and fine reputation, then the more the spurious arises, the more principles will be lost, and the finer this reputation grows, the more obvious his entanglements will become.}

Lynn, pp. 81-82; my parentheses. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, pp. 304-05.

<sup>33</sup> Kong, *ibid*, p. 304, note 3. See also *Cihai* 辭海 [Sea of Words Dictionary] (Shanghai: Cishu Chubanshe 辭書出版社, miniature ed. of 1979; first publ. 1936), pp. 104, 114.

<sup>34</sup> The use and effect of metaphor is most clearly illustrated here in Confucius' 'Appended Phrases' (within large brackets are Wang Bi's commentary):

The way they [the hexagrams] are named involves insignificant things, but the analogies so derived concern matters of great importance. {They rely on the images to bring the concepts to light and use the insignificant to serve as metaphor for the great.} The meanings are far-reaching, and the phrasing elegant. The language twists and turns but hits the mark. {Change and transformation lack any consistency, so no definite paradigms can be made for them. This is why the text says: 'The language twists and turns but hits the mark'} The things and events dealt with are obviously set forth, but hidden implications are involved.

fostering the ethical process to check the cosmic process) to the utmost (evolutionary progress is to be achieved by those who are best at preserving and strengthening the race fostering an orderly society to check the cosmic progress). Questions of ‘originality’ or ‘manipulation’, fundamental questions in literary criticism today, do not seem to have posed a problem at all to the Confucian translator.

Yan used a lot of comparison and analogy in his translation. In the penultimate paragraph of his ‘Remarks’, he explains that he has added his comparison of materials from the source text and other texts in the form of chapter-end commentaries for readers’ reference, since the perfection of reason and knowledge is akin to the practice of government, in that both place a premium on the pooling of ideas. He also says he is injecting his personal views in accordance with the spirit of the ancients, and for this he draws two allusions. One is about ‘friendship and kinship’, taken from the *Classic of Songs* – the metaphor of the calling bird here illustrates the importance of cultivating sincerity and loftiness and paying heed to the subtlety of things in the use of comparison and discussion to elicit echo.<sup>35</sup> The other is about the joy of ‘mutual

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Lynn, p. 87. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, p. 312.

<sup>35</sup> Yan cites two words, *yingqiu* 嚶求, based on the poem titled ‘Famu’ 伐木 [Cutting Wood], taken from the ‘Smaller Odes’ section in the *Classic of Songs*. *Ying* is onomatopoeia imitating the sound of birds and *qiu* means to seek. Below is the first of the three stanzas:

On the trees go the blows chǎng-chǎng;  
 And the birds cry out ying-ying.  
 One issues from the dark valley,  
 And removes to the lofty tree,  
 While ying foes its cry,  
 Seeking with its voice its companion.  
 Looking at the bird,  
 Bird as it is, seeking with its voice its companion;  
 And shall a man



learning and discussion', taken from the *Changes*.<sup>36</sup> The two metaphors are evidently akin to Confucius' recurrent view in the *Changes* that accomplishment out of sincerity will automatically draw echo and response, and there will be congruence in thought regardless of time and space.<sup>37</sup> Actually the *Changes* also explicitly ascribes the

Not seek to have his friends?

Spiritual beings will then hearken to him;

He shall have harmony and peace.

James Legge (trans.), *The She King or The Book of Poetry* = 詩經 (Taipei: Wenshizhe Chubanshe 文史哲出版社, 1972), pp. 253-55.

Xu Yuanchong translated the title 'Famu' as 'Friendship and Kinship'. The editor's note states: 'This was a festal ode sung at the entertainment of friends, intended to celebrate the duty and value of friendship.' See Xu Yuanchong 許淵沖 (trans.), *Book of Poetry* = 詩經 (Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe 湖南出版社, 1993), pp. 310-13.

<sup>36</sup> Yan cites two words, *lize* 麗澤, excerpted from Confucius' interpretation of the images of the *dui* 兌 hexagram in the *Classic of Changes*:

Lake clinging (*li*) (麗) to Lake (*ze*) (澤): this constitutes the image of Joy (*dui*) (兌). In the same way, the noble man engages in talk (*jiang*) (講) and study (*xi*) (習) with friends (*pengyou*) (朋友).

Lynn, p. 507; my parentheses. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, pp. 234-36.

In ancient texts, the image of 'joy' can be signified by the characters 兌 (*dui*) and 說 (*yue*) [now meaning speak]. The joy of study and discussion with friends is prominent in the very first discourse of the *Analects*:

The Master said, To learn (*xue*) (學) and at due times to repeat what one has learnt (*xi*) (習), is that not after all a pleasure (*yue*) (說)? That friends (*peng*) (朋) should come to one from afar, is this not after all delightful? To remain unsoured even though one's merits are unrecognised by others, is that not after all what is expected of a gentleman?

Arthure Waley (trans.), *The Analects* = 論語 (Beijing: Waiyu Jiaoyu Yu Yanjiu Chubanshe 外語教育與研究出版社, 1998), p. 3; my parentheses. Waley notes that 'after all' implies 'even though one does not hold office'.

According to Liu Baonan's commentary to *The Analects*, *xi* here means to apply or practise virtue in daily life after learning it from the classics and other civil arts, which brings pleasure. *Peng* means people who study after the same master and share similar ideas, rather than 'friend', suggesting that a noble man's virtuous deeds illuminate and attract a following far and wide. Liu Baonan 劉寶楠, *Lunyu Zhengyi* 論語正義 [The Correct Meaning of *The Analects*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1990), pp. 1-3.

<sup>37</sup> Confucius' 'Appended Phrases' to the *Changes* and Wang Bi's commentary (in large brackets)

winning of human support to *xin* (faith) and heavenly support to *shun* (accord with heaven).<sup>38</sup> At the end of the penultimate paragraph of his 'Remarks', Yan says:

Whether my views are sound or not I leave to public judgement. I do not insist on my own rectitude. If anyone should accuse me of being pretentious and seeking notoriety for myself, he misunderstands my intention in taking great pains to translate this book.<sup>39</sup>

This is indeed no ordinary intention. The implication for the translator is this: translation as an act of sincerity will bring friends and facilitate discussion. This allows no 'enslavement of one's capacity for thought and deliberation' but requires the release of the 'perfect concepts' behind images (words) into the numinous, which upon expansion and contraction allows the translator to extend the application of the pure concepts to the utmost in the translation. If the Confucian translator has faith and acts in accordance with heaven, he will secure support. Yan Fu's commentary

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state:

The *Changes* say: 'You pace back and forth in consternation, and friends follow your thoughts.' {All the activity that takes place in the world must revert back to the One. A person who has to resort to thought to seek friends is still incapable of the One, but when he elicits a response in others with the One, they will come to him without thinking.} The Master [Confucius] said: 'What does the world have to think and deliberate about? As all in the world ultimately comes to the same end, though the roads to it are different, so there is an ultimate congruence in thought, though there might be hundreds of ways to deliberate about it. So what does the world have to think and deliberate about?' Lynn, pp. 81-82. See also Kong, *Zhouyi Zhengyi*, p. 304.

<sup>38</sup> Confucius' 'Appended Phrases' to the *Changes* state:

The *Changes* says: 'Heaven will help (*you*) (祐) him as a matter of course; this is good fortune, and nothing will be to his disadvantage.' The Master said: '*You* [numinous help] means 'help.' One whom the Heaven helps is someone who is in accord with it (*shun*) (順). One whom people help is someone who is trustworthy (*xin*) (信). Such a one treads the *dao* of trustworthiness, keeps his thoughts in accord [with Heaven], and also thereby holds the worthy in esteem. This is why 'Heaven will help him as a matter of course; this is good fortune, and nothing will be to his disadvantage.' Lynn, pp. 66-67; my parentheses. See also Kong, pp. 290-91.



translation should be seen as his own ‘honest’ and ‘faithful’ transformation of images from the transitory source text in a way that convinced him of being true representation of the *dao*. He was not committed to a physical text or author. If anything, it was a collective cosmic text, an ‘ultimate congruence in thought’, an attempted fusion of horizons of the entire human race.<sup>40</sup> The transitory source texts served as points of departure to expand his own exegetical and eisegetical undertaking, ‘pooling’ together ‘perfect concepts’ from Western ‘evolutionary masters’ and a constellation of other Western and Chinese ‘sages’. Yan extended the epistemological means laid down in the *Changes* – free flow of concepts, images and metaphors – on the intercultural level through translation. Engaging in the highest learning, through contrast and comparison, he believed and showed that ‘hundreds of ways of deliberation’ ultimately ‘come to the same end’. His hybridized and heuristic discourse might hopefully elicit further discussion and deliberation, and put his countrymen on the alert. His translation was an act of *wenxue* – reason and deed at once, *dao* and its representation in one.

The whole concept of *xin* is a question of Confucian ontological faith. Even though Yan states in his ‘Remarks’ that his ‘free development’ based on the ‘purport’ of the source text, like Kumaarajiva’s, is not ‘the standard method’ of ‘pen translation’, it needs not lead to the ‘conclusion’ that identity with the source text is ‘the’ *a priori*

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<sup>39</sup> Yan Fu, ‘*Tianyanlun Yi Liyan*’, trans. by Hsu.

<sup>40</sup> Ricardo Mak believes that Yan Fu’s reception of Western works on liberal science was influenced by his life world, which in turn affected his understanding of such works. His translations ‘were in fact the fusion of his horizons and the contents’ of the original texts, and it is inevitable that he ‘distorted the intended meaning of these great Western minds’. Mai Jingsheng 麥勁生, ‘Yen Fu’s Interpretation of Western Classics: Perspectives and Historical Significance’ = 嚴復對西方經典之詮釋, *Historical Enquiry* = 臺大歷史學報, 25 (2000), 119-50.

standard of translation, especially when such a method is seen as equivalent to the despicable method of the 'tongue-man' and not 'the' method to be chosen by the 'noble man' with a 'profound purpose' – at least this was the view of Yan Fu and Wu Rulun. As illustrated in chapter 4, Yan Fu's claims to following the sense of the source text, such as in *Tianyanlun* and *Yuanfu*, served more as an apologetic than a claim to translation standard. And he revealed his 'intention' most explicitly in his last extended translation, that he was after 'metaphorical' explication rather than adhering to the source text and this kind of translation was his humble (but often misunderstood) way to self accomplishment.<sup>41</sup> Traces of addition, deletion, summarizing, paraphrasing and substitution scatter throughout Yan's translations as part of a free flow of concepts and metaphors elicited by a transitory source text. The resultant 'translation' of this cross-cultural mediation marked a self-cultivation endeavour. The contiguous, connective, and complementary relationships of the concepts embodied in his translations formed a system of their own, the individual parts of which might not correspond to individual parts of the source system, not even those of the target system, since neither was the primordial. So it is beside the point to argue that any of his translations are 'literal'. In fact it would be impossible to map his translations on the scale of literiness to any useful purpose, given his unique philosophy of translation. To Yan Fu, translation was only a tool; it was not an end in itself. His translations were acts of *wenxue*; they were not objects of pure literature. Seen in this light, there should be no need for sympathetic critics to gloss his effectual 'free' translation, 'unwarranted' commentaries, 'over-refined' language or 'violation' of his 'evergreen' translation principles without sound substantiation other than the

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<sup>41</sup> See 'Translator's Preface' to Yan Fu (trans.), *Mingxue Qianshuo* 名學淺說 [Elementary Study of Logic] (Taipei: Chen-fu Koo Cultural & Educational Foundation 財團法人辜公亮文教基金會, 1998;



pretext of 'exceptional exigencies', as this is irrelevant.<sup>42</sup> Allowing too many exceptions and qualifications would defeat the purpose of a 'general rule', not to mention that this was upheld as a 'golden model' in the field of translated literature.

*Xin* has been the most problematic notion in the *xin-da-ya* construct. *Da* appears to be more self-explanatory. *Da* as a verb literally means to access, reach, extend, express, communicate and get through; it can also be used as an adjective. In the field of

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first publ. 1909), p. vii.

<sup>42</sup> The most glaring and unsubstantiated gloss perhaps comes from He Lin 賀麟. He Lin classifies Yan's translations according to three phases: early, middle and late. He says that his early translations, like that of *Evolution and Ethics*, *Spirit of Laws* and *A System of Logic* (the latter two are hardly early works), 'seem somehow in want of *xin*' since 'firstly, he translated new Western scientific terms with old Chinese concepts' and 'secondly, his translation skill was not yet sophisticated and he aimed at conveying the purport rather than literal translation' (literalism and faithfulness to the source text should be separate issues). He declares that Yan's translations in the middle phase attain *xin*, *da* and *ya*, like the rendering of *Study of Sociology*, *Wealth of Nations*, *On Liberty* and *A History of Politics* (the first two should be early works). The reasons he gives are absurd: Yan revised his scripts several times (revision was no rare practice; Yan also amended *Tianyanlun* several times, even after publication in 1898; and Yan actually marked the distinction of rights between the group and the self in his revision of the translation of *On Liberty*), he attempted literal translation (it remains baffling why literal translation should automatically bring faithfulness to the source text, fluency and elegant expression), as he mentioned in his translational notes of *Yuanfu*. He Lin remarks that Yan's later translations, like the translation of *Primer of Logic* and of Westharp on education, are 'even freer in translating the sense' (along He's argument, it is puzzling why Yan's translation skill had not become sophisticated by then), employing 'substitution', which is a 'pioneer method in translation in China', which can be appropriate if practised properly (substitution was already copiously employed in early sutra translation, and it remains dubious whether He considers Yan's substitution appropriate). See He Lin 賀麟 'Yan Fu De Fanyi' 嚴復的翻譯 [Yan Fu's Translation], 1925, in *Lun Yan Fu Yu Yanyi Mingzhu* 論嚴復與嚴譯名著 [On Yan Fu and His Famous Translations], ed. by Shangwu Yinshuguan Section 商務印書館編輯部 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), pp. 28-42. He Lin also quotes Hu Xiansu 胡先驕 as claiming that Yan's scrupulous translations are faithful, expressive and elegant, the all-time paragon for translators, that he once compared Yan's translation of *On Liberty* and *A History of Politics* with the source texts and found 'no meaning that is in want or in excess'. Hu has not offered any example or substantiation.

translated literature in China, *da* is usually taken at face value – expressiveness or comprehensibility – on which different critics arrive at different conclusions.<sup>43</sup> In his ‘Remarks’, Yan Fu applies the following quotation to justify *da*:

The master says: *Da* is all that matters in *ci* (speech).

This is indeed ‘all’ that Confucius said in one independent discourse from the *Analects*. In Confucian exegesis, *da* in speech refers to what is required for the representation of *shi* 實 [fact, substance], since substance is all that matters in things; for speech, there is no standard rule nor any special norm in regard to length or refinement – as long as the substance ‘gets through’, there will be ‘righteousness’ (*yi*) 義.<sup>44</sup> We have already discussed Yan Fu’s hints on how to achieve *da*: digesting the ‘spirit and reason’ of the source text in mind to elicit spontaneous free flow of the pen, with expansion and reordering to bring out profound and difficult ‘word and reason’ of the source text; the ‘conduct’ of *da* would mean the ‘conduct’ of *xin*. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Tongcheng founder Fang Bao also stresses the circuitous interplay of deep, discerning and spiritual meditation of the *qi* 氣 [pneuma] of ancient texts in the practice of *guwen*.<sup>45</sup> This kind of consummate representation and

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<sup>43</sup> Hu Shi, for instance, thinks that Yan Fu managed barely to achieve *da* with his mastery of the ‘dead language’ *guwen*. Wang Zuoliang thinks *da* means to express in a way that suits the taste of one’s intended readership, and considering Yan’s Sinocentric elite readers, *guwen* is a legitimate medium, a ‘sugarcoat’. See Shen Suru, pp. 67, 76.

<sup>44</sup> In the ensuing discussion of *da*, I am referring mainly to Liu Baonan, p. 349; Cheng Shude 程樹德, *Lunyu Jishi* 論語集釋 [Collected Exegeses on *The Analects*], 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1990), IV, p. 1127. These two references record comprehensive exegetic interpretations of the *Analects*.

<sup>45</sup> Fang Bao’s opinions in Tongcheng poetics is quoted in Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Zhongguo Wenxue Pipingshi* 中國文學批評史 [A History of Chinese Literary Criticism], 2 vols. (Tianjin: Baihua Wenyi



numinous mediation, akin to the epistemology embodied in the *Changes* discussed above, is probably the goal of not only the idealized Confucian gentleman, but also the most sincere translators of the Bible and Buddhist scriptures.

The issues of *ci* and *da* were crucial for the proper conduct of interstate politics in the pre-Han period. The most important references for effective and decorous communication in diplomacy and politics in this period were the Confucian classics.<sup>46</sup> It is said in the *Rites* that excessive speech would be near to pedantry of the scribe, while insufficient speech would fail to communicate (*da*).<sup>47</sup> There is also a saying in the *Analects* stating that ‘a single utterance’ can make or break a state.<sup>48</sup> Speech functions as speech acts in the Confucian tradition, just as literature functions as an act of *wenxue*. *Da* need not only mean getting through in speech, it also means getting through in political achievement: being influential or distinguished.<sup>49</sup> *Da* constitutes

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Chubanshe 百花文艺出版社, 1999; first publ. 1934, 1947), II, pp. 342-43.

<sup>46</sup> There is a famous account in the *Analects* about Confucius’ son Bo Yu. When asked whether he had heard anything specific from his father, he replied that Confucius gave him no special instruction other than inquiring whether he had studied the *Songs* and the *Rites*. Confucius told his son that if he did not study the *Songs* and the *Rites*, he would not be fit to converse with, nor would he know decorum and be capable of establishing his character. In the end, the astonished questioner learned three things from one question: the importance of the *Songs* and the *Rites*, and the fact that the virtuous man maintained a distant reserve towards his son. See Legge, *The Chinese/English Four Books*, pp. 223-25; Waley, pp. 223-25.

<sup>47</sup> Cheng, V, p. 1127.

<sup>48</sup> When Duke Ding asked whether there was a single utterance that could make a state prosperous and one that could ruin a state, Confucius answered no. But for the first question, he offered the nearest saying: ‘It is hard to be a prince and not easy to be a minister.’ As for the second, he offered: ‘What pleasure is there in being a prince, unless one can say whatever one chooses, and no one dares to disagree?’ Legge, *The Chinese/English Four Books*, pp. 181-83; Waley, p. 165.

<sup>49</sup> Confucius is quoted as saying that to be qualified for the honour of *da* in his family or state, a gentry officer must be by nature solid and straightforward and a lover of righteousness, who examines people’s words, observes their countenances and be anxious to humble himself to others. See Legge,

the necessary decorum for political accessibility of a gentleman, the preservation of a state and its people amid war and rivalry and helps to manifest the *dao*. As for Yan Fu, ancillary to his pursuit of the *dao* were similar problems: how to achieve political accessibility and win the trust of the elite in power to run his gradual reform platform; how to ensure survival of the Chinese race in its bitter struggle against antagonistic Western nation states, and how to modernize indigenous epistemology and methodology in a changing world.

Waley translates the *da* quotation as: 'The Master said, In official speeches all that matters is to get one's meaning through.'<sup>50</sup> E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks translate this as: 'The words should reach their goal, and nothing more.'<sup>51</sup> Simon Leys translates this as: 'Words are merely for the communication', providing an interesting note stating that language is vehicular, transitive and good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, and not as farms and houses are, for homestead.<sup>52</sup> This implies that in speech, what matters is the tool for the transference of meaning at large, but not the verbal text itself. Applying this view to translation with reference to Confucian poetics, what matters in speech should be decorum for reaching the *dao*, rather than the 'original message' itself.

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*The Chinese/English Four Books*, pp. 173-75; Waley, p. 155.

<sup>50</sup> Waley, p. 213. Waley notes that 'official speeches' mean 'pleas, messages, excuses for being unable to attend to one's duties, etc.', taking in the extended meaning of '*ci*' as 'excuse or pretext' as well.

<sup>51</sup> E. Bruce Brooks 白牧之 and A. Taeko Brooks 白妙子, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* = 論語辨 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 135. The Brooks suggest that this commonsense view of language is perhaps meant as a statement against the contemporary Mohist analytic interest in language. They also quote parallel maxims, such as Matthew Arnold's: 'Have something to say and say it as clearly as you can; that is the only secret of style.' This is clearly a pure literary notion.

<sup>52</sup> Simon Leys, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997), pp. 79, 117 (note).



Legge's translation is: 'In language it is simply required that it convey the meaning.'<sup>53</sup>

Achilles Fang comments that this translation encompasses the traditional interpretation of this enigmatic saying: a gentleman as idealized by Confucius is essentially a *Homo politicus*, whose interest in life should be much more comprehensive than mere stylistic accomplishment; hence, he has no time to waste on polishing his literary ability, for all he has to do is to be able to make others understand him.<sup>54</sup> Fang also suggests that this interpretation seems to have been in Yan Fu's mind when he formulated the 'xin-da-ya' theory of 'accuracy, intelligibility, elegance', though he did not offer any substantiation.<sup>55</sup> Although Fang has not attempted in-depth study of the *xin-da-ya* principles, the extension of his view conforms to the findings of this thesis so far. He is right in seeing a congruence of thought between Yan and Confucius, both taking the idealized noble man as the point of departure. Yan Fu translated primarily to carry through the *dao*; the 'original text' is beside the point. He wanted to make others understand him in his seemingly apologetic 'Remarks'. He made it explicit to Liang Qichao, who criticized him as flaunting his erudite *guwen*, and to his editor Zhang Yuanji that mere rhetoric or antiquity were beside the point with his poetics – his poetics represented an inevitable choice, a natural cause that was 'right' or 'appropriate'.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Legge, *The Chinese English Four Books*, p. 215.

<sup>54</sup> Achilles Fang, 'Some Reflections on the Difficulty of Translation', in *On Translation*, ed. by Reuben Arthur Brower (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 111-133 (pp. 125, 129).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 129.

<sup>56</sup> Yan Fu, 'Yu Liang Qichao Shu' 與梁啓超書 [Letter to Liang Qichao], 1902, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 550-51. According to Yan Fu, for *wen*, abstruseness or accessibility are irrelevant and all that matters is *shi* 是, which literally means 'it is like this/right'.

Marianne Moore translates the *da* quotation as: 'When you have done justice to the meaning, stop'. She considers this a master axiom of all writing, pointing to a 'fascinating simulacrum of spontaneity' that constitutes the requisite of a translation: it should not sound like a translation.<sup>57</sup> This view implies that translation and writing follow the same requisites, beginning with a simulacrum of spontaneity and ends with rewriting, presenting the world to us as 'translations of translations of translations'.<sup>58</sup> In this connection, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere remind us that translation is 'a rewriting of an original text.'<sup>59</sup> This is reminiscent of Yan Fu's translation project, hinting that writing in itself is already translation. It is generally perceived that Yan Fu's translations do not read like translations, which is not surprising, considering the whole universe of Confucian discourse fused with the mediated Western discourse embedded in his intellectual critique, his *guwen* (re)writing. A translation is a translation but should not read like a translation, because a translated text is a transitory but new representation of the transference of images and metaphors upon which signification is changed.

*Ya* comes last in the tripartite *xin-da-ya* formula. In the field of translated literature, *ya*

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<sup>57</sup> Translated by Marianne Moore, quoted in Achilles Fang, 'Some Reflections on the Difficulty of Translation', in *On Translation*, ed. by Reuben Arthur Brower (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 111-133, p. 133, note 1.

<sup>58</sup> See Octavio Paz, 'Translation: Literature and Letters', trans. by Irene del Corral, in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.152-62 (p. 154).

<sup>59</sup> 'Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way.' Quoted from preface to Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture* (London: Pinter, 1990), p.ix.



is often interpreted as a question of elegant or archaic language.<sup>60</sup> It has also been ‘adapted’ to modern functional approaches to translation as a notion of rhetoric that suits the readers or text type.<sup>61</sup> The concept of *ya* is taken from *Zuo’s Commentary*, as specified in Yan Fu’s ‘Remarks’:

For *yan* 言 [speech] without *wen* 文 [civil virtue], the effect will not *xingyuan* 行遠 [to walk or extend far].

Yan then equates *ya* with *erya* 爾雅 [near proper], which to him constitutes another guideline for *wenxue* and translation. For *erya*, Yan specifies the use of pre-Han wording and syntax, in other words, primordial *guwen*, to carry through (*da*) ‘profound reason and subtle meaning’. It has already been clarified that in Confucian *wenxue*, *wen* means virtue and rhetoric is never a question. As for *erya*, besides serving as an adjective or noun meaning ‘near proper’, it is also the title of an old dictionary. The matter here is clearly a question of poetics relating to Tongcheng *guwen* and *Zuo’s Commentary*. The Tongcheng Stream held itself as *guwen* mainstream and prescribed exacting, sometimes considered fastidious, discipline in writing and scholarship. The concept of *ya*, in relation to *wen*, was explained in detail in the following reply by Wu Rulun to Yan Fu. When asked by Yan whether it would be better to trim ‘unacceptable’ expressions for the sake of *erya* or to retain them at

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<sup>60</sup> Such a stance probably starts with Lu Xun, who remarked that in Yan Fu’s days, Westerners were generally thought to be good at skills and gadgets only, and returned students from the West speaking the tongue of the ‘foreign devils’ were not as privileged as those in Lu’s days. That was why Yan had to write in elegant and syncopated language to win the support of Wu Rulun. Lu Xun 魯迅, ‘Lu Xun Gai Qu Qiubai De Huixin’ 魯迅給瞿秋白的回信 [Lu Xun’s Reply Letter to Qu Qiubai], 1931, in *Essays on Translation* = 譯論集, ed. by Liu Jingzhi 劉靖之 (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1981), pp. 11-18.

<sup>61</sup> Shen Suru, pp. 47, 244.

the expense of *jie* 潔 [lit. clean, clear, concise] in translation, the monoglot master suggested that *jie* be upheld at the expense of *zhen* 真 [lit. fact, truth], since ‘unworthy’ materials were dispensable, and any good writer would try to refrain from vulgar and shallow talk, like Wu’s mentor Zeng Guofan.<sup>62</sup> This shows that even though Wu had asked Yan Fu to avoid using Chinese allusions in translation, he was not after identity with the source text, or ‘faithfulness’, as an *a priori* standard after all. To Wu and Yan, Tongcheng poetics was evidently more important than transferring everything of the source text in translation.

*Ya* is usually associated with the notion of *yajie* 雅潔, which refers to abstinence from trivial and vulgar talk, and from ‘improper’ genres such as novels, correspondence, collected sayings, criticism of poetry and poets, examination-oriented *bagu* essays and ‘current prose’ (*shiwen*) on utilitarian subjects.<sup>63</sup> Quoting examples from the classics in the letter, Wu explained that the narration of virtuous and righteous conduct in colloquial and vulgar language would not necessarily violate the standard of *ya*, and there could be ways to trim down on offensive subjects without missing facts or the point.<sup>64</sup> He also suggested that similar

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<sup>62</sup> Wu Rulun 吳汝綸, ‘Zhi Yan Fu Shu’ 致嚴復書 [Letter to Yan Fu], 3 April 1899, in *Yan Fu Ji*, V, pp. 1564-65. As a matter of fact, Yan Fu also upheld Zeng Guofan’s prose and described Tongcheng poetics as *yanjie* 嚴潔 [disciplined and pithy] in a letter to Wu. See Yan Fu, ‘Yu Wu Rulun Shu’ 與吳汝綸書 [Letter to Wu Rulun], 29 January 1900, in *Yan Fu Ji*, III, pp. 522-23.

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, Guo Shaoyu, II, pp. 320-21.

<sup>64</sup> Wu Rulun, *ibid.* Wu quoted four examples of righteous discourse in vulgar and colloquial language - ‘horse shit’, ‘shit and piss’, a wrong word and an interjection. ‘Horse shit’ is taken from an account in *Zuo’s Commentary*, about an official failing to take the advice of his subordinate and is unjustly murdered and disposed in horse shit; the account is an implicit censure of the evil acts of the people involved in a coup. ‘Shit and piss’ is taken from Daoist canon *Zhuangzi*, in which the Daoist master alludes that the *dao* rests in one’s heart and can be found anywhere, even in such lowly things as shit



*guwen* poetics be used in translating European history and biographies, along the same vein of thought as he gauged Western literature by Confucian *wenxue* standards in his foreword to *Tiyanlun*.<sup>65</sup> It is clear that *ya* is often associated with *jie* in Tongcheng *guwen* poetics, *jie* being a prime notion in *yifa* (writing with substance and order), the standard rules of Tongcheng prose writing.<sup>66</sup> Thus the notions of *ya* and

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and piss. The wrong word concerns a slip of the tongue being passed down in the oral tradition but nevertheless recorded subsequently in *Gongyang Commentary* 公羊傳 of *Spring and Autumn Annals*; the account is an innuendo about the improper conduct of a Duke. The interjection is a colloquial emotive release mentioned in *Historical Records*. Besides, Wu held that *Historical Records*, an exemplar of *wen*, would not have recorded certain crude and improper accounts and characters as other mediocre writers did. Similarly, improper subjects such as opium dens should be avoided for the sake of *wen*, but a biography of Viceroy Lin Zexu might well include extensive records of his achievement in destroying imported opium, provided that a full explanation was given. On the other hand, the chapter about government regulation of resources and prices in *Historical Records* and the critique on government monopoly of salt and iron trades in *History of the Han Dynasty* 漢書 managed to treat unworthy subjects concisely and to the point, even though commerce and profit-making activities were considered less worthy causes than moral and political pursuits.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. For the translation of European history, Wu suggested following the manner invented by his mentor Zeng Guofan, which he thought required great proficiency. He argued it was possible in Chinese translations of European history to preserve rhymed prose, though it would be difficult to attain real *ya* and surpass the paragon of rhymed prose already set by *guwen* master Han Yu. For European biographies, the narration of which he considered unpalatably trivial, Wu suggested trimming according to the methods in *Historical Records* and *History of the Han Dynasty*. He reasoned that ‘untailored’ writing geared specifically to the representation of complete details – like certain inferior Chinese biographies or worst still, the trivial genre fiction – could not have extended effects.

<sup>66</sup> Literally, *yi* 義 means meaning or righteousness and *fa* 法 rule or method. Tongcheng founder Fang Bao conceives of *yifa* as the two legs of a compass in Confucian *guwen*:

*Yifa*, which stems from *Spring and Autumn Annals*, is expatiated by the Grand Historian [Sima Qian, author of the *Historical Records*] and attained in later works immersed in *wen*. *Yi* means ‘writing with substance’ and *fa* ‘writing with order’, as mentioned in the *Classic of Changes*. *Yi*, as longitude, combines with *fa*, as latitude, to give form to a text.

Fang Bao 方苞, ‘Youshu “Huozhizhuan” Hou’ 又書貨殖傳後 [Sequel to Remarks on ‘Account on Trading’ in *Historical Records*], in *Fang Bao Ji* 方苞集 [Works of Fang Bao], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe 古籍出版社, 1983), I, pp. 58-59 (p. 58); my translation.

See also Fang 方望溪, *Zuozhuan Yifa* 左傳義法 [Rules of Composition of *Zuo’s Commentary*] (Taipei:

*erya* refer to decorum in *wen*, concerning *dao*-oriented subject matter or substance; mere elegance or stylistics are beside the point.

Yan Fu notes that the effect of a piece of literature cannot be extended far without *wen*. This almost appears as *déjà vu* of the metaphor of contraction and expansion required for the mediation of reason and pure concepts in the discussion of *xin* above. *Zuo's Commentary* of the pithy *Spring and Autumn Annals*, noted for its substantial content, neat narrative and orderly structure, is regarded as a model of *Tongcheng yifa*, which is seen as a moral deed in itself and conceals a moral-political function.<sup>67</sup> The 'substance' of *Zuo's Commentary* lies in its detailed account of busy interstate diplomatic activities of the Spring and Autumn Period, when the throne of the Zhou emperor was eclipsed by feudal lords. The various states were in frequent rivalry and

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Guangwen Shuju 廣文書局, 1977). Fang Bao esteems *Zuo's Commentary* and *Historical Records* to be the best model of *yifa*, thought to be traceable in *guwen* embracing civil grace and thus can be learnt and practised. See Fang Bao, 'Guwen Yuexuan Xuli' 古文約選序例 [Preface to *An Anthology of Ancient Prose*], in *Fang Bao Ji*, II, pp. 612-16 (p. 613). According to Guo Shaoyu, the notion *yifa* can be interpreted at two levels. In a broader sense, it entails the mediation of form and content synthesizing literary criticism tenets of the School of Dao Learning and School of Ancient Prose. In terms of methodology, it assimilates the approaches of pre-Han/Han writers and Tang/Song writers to imitate ancient prose through phonetic and stylistic studies respectively. Guo Shaoyu, II, pp. 315-16.

<sup>67</sup> *Zuo's Commentary* is commonly accepted as having been written by Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 in the early Warring States Period (475-221 BC). The commentary supplements extensive narrative accounts and important references on the brief historical events chronicled in Confucius' *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the latter known for its insinuating moral critique between the lines. Both works are considered important references on politics and satire. *Zuo's Commentary* contains extensive narration about words and deeds, even down to minute details of speeches and actions of diplomats, since diplomatic activities were significant during the Spring and Autumn Period and the ensuing Period of Warring States. See David Copley Schaberg, *Foundations of Chinese Historiography: Literary Representation in Zuozhuan and Guoyu* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1996); preface to Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhu* 春秋左傳注 [Commentary to *Zuo's Commentary* to *Spring and Autumn Annals*], 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1990).



the decorum of diplomats, their every word and deed, could determine the fate of a state and its people. As diplomats travelled far and wide to execute their political duties, it was their practice to apply extensively those classics and liberal arts that Confucius and his disciples studied, which developed into a tradition in itself, so *Zuo's Commentary* is often seen as a classic record of diplomatic speech acts.<sup>68</sup>

Chen Zhihong suggests that diplomatic discourses, in particular their poetic quotations from the *Classic of Songs*, were indirect speech acts which might have been more powerful than military force in the conduct of interstate politics, serving a moral-political function geared at maximizing benefits for one's state or resolving conflicts and antagonism.<sup>69</sup> Again we have to interpret the *Songs* as an act of virtue and righteousness in itself. So it is no coincidence that the ancient term for diplomat is *xingren* 行人 [lit. walking man], while the verb that Yan uses for 'extend' here is also *xing* 行 [lit. walk]. The metaphor of walking as extending virtue and righteousness here is as large as life. Yan's preference for pre-Han poetics probably reflects his indulgence in the pre-Han life world. Benjamin I. Schwartz rightfully claims that the conglomeration of separate states and principalities before the second century BC

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<sup>68</sup> For an overview of the themes, structure and stylistics of *Zuo's Commentary*, see Zhang Gaoping 張高評, *Zuozhuan Wenzhang Yifa Danwei* 左傳文章義法譚微 [A Study of the Composition Rules of *Zuo's Commentary*] (Taipei: Wenshizhe Chubanshe 文史哲出版社, 1982); Schaberg. The notion of performative act here is more complicated than the kind of speech act theory as explained in J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), in which a performative act refers to an utterance which performs an act, such as an imperative sentence or a declarative promise. Schaberg observes that in Chinese historiography, all action tends to reaffirm the normative power of an interstate system of *li* 禮 [propriety] which is associated with King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty, requiring observation and interpretation, transgression and correction. Schaberg, p. 563.

<sup>69</sup> Chen Zhihong 陳致宏, *Yuyongxue Yu Zuozhuan Waijiao Fushi* 語用學與左傳外交賦詩 [Pragmatics and Diplomatic Poetic Quotations in *Zuo's Commentary*] (Taipei: Wanjuanlou Tushu

presented to Yan a competitive reality latent with immense dynamic possibilities, including a rudimentary science of international politics and joint security efforts and reminded him of the emerging multistate system of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe.<sup>70</sup>

The implication of the epigram on *ya* in *Zuo's Commentary* is clear: for a diplomat merely to speak (even in refined language) without manifesting virtue and righteousness, the effect would be slight. As for Yan Fu, to whom translation as an act of *wenxue* also served moral and political functions, the impact of translation without mirroring virtue and righteousness would remain constrained. His incisive critique of foreign works in the form of translation was an act of *ya*. This is why Yan sought to clarify in his 'Remarks' that he was obliged to choose pre-Han *guwen*, the traditional vehicle of the *dao* which would make it easier to illustrate aptly the substance of abstruse works, although *guwen* was not extremely popular those days except among the elite. Whereas with the vulgar and expedient vernacular, though an increasingly popular medium especially for fiction and newspapers but untried on works containing profound reasoning and subtle thought, it would be hard to conduct *da* and may often lead to gross misinterpretation, straining the meaning to fit the word. That is why he insisted that this was not a matter of eccentricity and that people misunderstood the intention behind his abstruse language and involved style.

A further look into the relevant section in *Zuo's Commentary* will provide more

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Youxian Gongsì 萬卷樓圖書有限公司, 2000).

<sup>70</sup> Benjamin I. Schwartz, 'The Chinese Perception of World Order, Past and Present', in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. by John King Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 276-88 (pp. 278-79).



substantiation of the above claim. The story is about Zichan, diplomat of the state of Zheng, presenting war booty from their victory over the invading smaller state of Chen to the bigger state of Jin, so as to solicit their support against Chen. When challenged by Jin officials, Zichan put forward substantial arguments citing interstate history, relationships, decorum and Heaven's will to justify their 'war of justice'.<sup>71</sup> His representation on virtue and righteousness was so convincing that the high Jin official immediately agreed to stand on his side, exclaiming that it would be inauspicious to contravene the diplomat's speech, which went in accord with Heaven (*shun*).<sup>72</sup> 'Accord' here is not primarily a linguistic matter, but a moral or even transcendental one. A few months later, Zichan escorted his ruler to Jin to acknowledge Jin's acceptance of war spoils. Having secured the support of the bigger state, Zheng soon launched another attack on Chen and the two countries made peace.

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<sup>71</sup> When asked about Chen's offence, Zichan 子產 recounted that despite great generosity offered by past rulers of Zheng 鄭, the state of Chen 陳 ungratefully attacked Zheng and committed gruesome acts, backed by the huge state of Chu 楚, while the other big state of Jin did not promise Zheng timely assistance. (Zheng was geographically crammed between Chu and Jin, who rivalled for leadership of the alliance of states.) Zichan said, 'Heaven guided us and inspired us to call Chen to account. That state knows that its punishment was occasioned by its own transgression.' When challenged about why Zheng should go to war with the smaller state Chen, he rebuked that they were just acting upon natural justice, insinuating that Jin had expanded its territory unrighteously by encroaching on smaller states. When further challenged about why he should appear in full military attire at the court of Jin, he reasoned that he was acting according to the decorum laid down by the past dukes of Jin and Zheng and the Emperor of the Zhou Dynasty. Thus Zichan succeeded in 'presenting his captives and maintaining Zheng's autonomous position in the international order'. See also Schaberg, pp. 463-6; James Legge (trans.), *The Ch'un Ts'ew with The Tso Chuen* = 春秋左傳 (Taipei: Wenshizhe Chubanshe 文史哲出版社, 1972), p. 516; Hu Zhihui (trans.), *Zuo's Commentary* = 左傳 (Changsha: Hubei Renmin Chubanshe 湖北人民出版社, 1996), pp. 875-77.

<sup>72</sup> This reminds us of the image of *shun* in the *Changes* in note 40, that one who treads the *dao* of trustworthiness and keeps his thoughts in accord with (*shun*) Heaven will hold the worthy in esteem, experience good fortune and nothing to his disadvantage, and win the help of Heaven and experience good fortune, while one who is trustworthy (*xin*) will win the help of people.

Confucius' comments on the whole matter is quoted in *Zuo's Commentary*:

Confucius said: An ancient book *Zhi* 志 says, 'Speech completes one's thoughts, and *wen* 文 completes one's speech.' Without speech, who would know one's thoughts? Without *wen*, speech will not go far. Zheng's entrance into Chen under Jin's hegemony would not have been an achievement but for *wenci* 文辭. Be cautious with *ci*!<sup>73</sup>

Here, it would be superficial, if not unreasonable, to interpret *ci* as speech or language and *wen* elegant language. As discussed above, the concepts of *ci* and *wen* concern faith, virtue, instruction and accomplishment in Confucian poetics and in this context, they apparently refer to act and/or speech that parallels truth and righteousness as exemplified in the classics, an act of virtue.<sup>74</sup> In fact, Zichan is best remembered for his 'speech-acts' of virtue, which enabled him to take charge of the administration of Zheng and win the trust of people, the respect of other feudal lords, the awe of bigger

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<sup>73</sup> My translation and brackets. See also Schaberg, p. 464; Legge, *ibid*, pp. 516-17; Hu Zhihui, p. 875-79; Kong Yingda, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 [The Correct Meaning of *Zuo's Commentary to Spring and Autumn Annals*], 3 vols. (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 1999), II, pp. 1021-24; Yang Bojun, III, pp. 1104-06.

<sup>74</sup> Schaberg observes that *wen* in this context 'is not only the pattern which makes Zichan's words elegant, but the cultural associations which make these words compelling', highlighting a general desire 'for adherence to received values', accommodating 'personal ambitions to sanctioned norms'. Such ambitions, rather than self-indulgence, are driven by a desire to extend primordial Confucian values, often facilitated by proper 'canonical citations as tokens of truth' building 'a structure of parallels and equivalences into a text which was perhaps as valuable for its literary elegance as for its ordered treatment of moral categories'. See Schaberg, pp. 440-65. In another context, Schaberg observes that the manifestation of *wen* is crucial even without citing classical texts:

While no classical texts were cited in that speech, it did assign a central place to *wen*, loosely defined in that context as inherited, patterned culture and the manner associated with that culture. It also seemed to treat language as a treasury of truthful interconnections: the rhetorical definitions and transitions of the particular speech drew their power from a certainty that language as a whole – a vast network of largely unexplored, potential connections – was a true guide for the world.



states and even the blessing of Heaven – it was alleged that Confucius wept upon the news of his death.<sup>75</sup> The meaning of *wen* as virtue as distinguished from refined language can also be seen from an account involving the ancient sage-king Wen, who was described as a paragon of virtue possessing dignity and deportment (*weiyi*) 威儀 commanding the people's affection, the respect of small states and the awe of great states: 'There is *wen* in his movement and *zhang* 章 [order, brilliance] in his

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Ibid, pp. 451-52.

<sup>75</sup> As the story goes, the decorous Zichan later escorted his ruler to see the ruler of Jin again, who this time declined to meet them. Zichan then ordered that the walls around his small reception house be torn down so that their attendants and carriages with sumptuous gifts be directly brought into the grounds. He justified his act by contrasting the misconduct of the incumbent ruler of Jin with the virtuous deed of its past ruler, Duke Wen 文公, leader of the interstate alliance at his time, who lived in a humble palace to make way for grander reception houses for visiting feudal lords and their attendants and showed his visitors the greatest hospitality and virtue, so that they felt at home. Zichan's righteous speech won immediate apology and extra hospitality from Jin, and a better reception house was built. A high Jin official Shu Xiang 叔向 was quoted as saying,

Thus *ci* cannot be dispensed with! Zichan is conversant with *ci*, so the feudal rulers are obliged to him. The *Classic of Songs* says, 'In the harmony of *ci* lies the people's concord. In the geniality of *ci* rests the people's repose.'

My translation. See also Legge, *ibid*, p. 565; Hu Zhihui, pp. 988-89.

This shows that *ci* concerns harmony and righteousness in speech, not refinement. Besides, Zichan also won the respect of the big state Wei, whose high official remarked that since he administered his state in accordance with propriety (*li*) 禮, his state would enjoy good fortune for many generations to come and would escape attack from any of the great states. The meaning of *wen* as virtue can also be seen from the following account. Zichan was known for selecting able persons and assigning them duties according to their specialties. Among his aides, Feng Jianzi was good at judging prime matters, Zi Taishu handsome and accomplished in *wen*, Gongsun Hui knew the situations of neighbouring states well and was skilful in composing speeches and documents (*ciling*) 辭令, and Pi Chen was good at planning. So when his state had any business to do with other states, he would first consult Gongsun Hui and have him compose most of the speeches, then ask Pi Chen for a plan and Feng Jianzi for his judgement. When all these were done, he would ask Zi Taishu to carry it into effect (*xing*), and things seldom went wrong this way. Here the important distinction between *wen* as decorum, virtue and accomplishment, and *ci* as words, rhetoric or refined language is reaffirmed. See Legge, *ibid*, pp. 564-65; Hu Zhihui, pp. 985-93.

speech.<sup>76</sup>

Thus the concept of *ya* must be interpreted in relation to *wen*. The focus of *wen* lies in virtue, substance and order for performance, and performance begets stylistics in the subsequent semiotic representation of mediated reason and pure concept. The question of (refined) expression is not ruled out but inscribed; it is simply not the question to pore. For Yan Fu, *guwen* was the consummate vehicle of *da* and *ya* in translation, as in writing or other modes of conduct, since translation functions as a performative act, and the *raison d'être* of the conduct of *da* and *ya* was the conduct of *xin*, or faith in the Confucian *dao*.

Chinese exegetical hermeneutics represent a process of truth discovery and system regeneration that exhausts the 'historicity' of both the classics and the interpreter in evincing the moral and metaphysical depths of the classics as media of the *dao*.<sup>77</sup> It is not surprising then that the moral faith exercised by seekers of the Confucian *dao* is sometimes compared to religious faith, and Confucian exegesis likened to a hermeneutic circle in which critical and existential testing of knowledge becomes a

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<sup>76</sup> This part comes after the long narrative account about Zichan in the Annals of Duke Xiang. See Legge, *ibid*, pp. 566-67; Hu Zhihui, pp. 997-99.

<sup>77</sup> Huang Chun-chieh says that Confucian hermeneutics is primarily 'experimental' learning and reading the classics is for the sake of self-cultivation in longing admiration of the ancient sages. In the unending dialogue with a classic, the 'historicity' of the interpreter helps to excavate subtle meanings but may also twist the meanings. The interpreter reads new meanings into a classic transcending the temporality in which the classic is embedded. This keeps the classic alive but simultaneously creates a tension between the classic and its interpreter. Huang Junjie 黃俊傑, 'The "Historicity" of the Interpreters and Its Related Problems Exhibited in the History of Confucian Hermeneutics' = 從儒家經典詮釋史觀點論解經者的「歷史性」及其相關問題, *History Journal* = 臺大歷史學報, 24 (1999), 1-28.



regenerative circle.<sup>78</sup> The Confucian repertoire represents a tradition of passing on the multi-faceted images of the *dao*, captured through a multi-faceted exegetical and eisegetical prism that legitimizes extended verification, application and borrowing on the intertextual level (critiques, commentaries and narratives), the intracultural level (with Daosim, Mohism, Legalism and other indigenous peripheral thinking) and the intercultural level (with Buddhism and, in Yan Fu's time, modern Western thinking) on the bedrock of faith.

Yan Fu's translation project represents a modern Confucian's response to his exigencies in the pursuit of the *dao*, which is typical of the Confucian this-worldly perspective on an other-worldly question, though the scale of his cross-cultural means of exegetical and eisegetical transference was unprecedented. There appears to be an affinity here between Confucian epistemology and the Heideggerian epistemological concern for the perpetual unfolding of 'Being-there' (*Dasein*) as an existential answer to the eternal question of Being.<sup>79</sup> For the existential translator, as George Steiner suggests, understanding as an act in the search of Being-there is 'inherently

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<sup>78</sup> Tu Ching-i's anthology, for example, examines the Confucian hermeneutical tradition at work over the millennia, showing how the Confucian tradition was kept alive, if not regenerated, through different practices of hermeneutical exegesis. Tu Ching-i (ed.), *Classis and Interpretations. The Hermeneutic Traditions in Chinese Culture* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000). Chen Lifu illustrates how major motifs flow in the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects* and *Mencius*, which were 'composed' at different times by different authors. Chen Lifu, *The Confucian Way. A new and Systematic Study of 'The Four Books'*, translated by Liu Shih Shun (London: KPI, 1986). Tu Wei-ming suggests that Dong Zhongshu's hermeneutical association of kingship with the theological tenet of 'heaven-man oneness or telepathy' was intended as check and balance for, rather than unconditional sanctification of, kingship. Du Weiming 杜維明, *Xiandai Jingshen Yu Rujia Chuantong* 現代精神與儒家傳統 [Modernity and the Confucian Tradition] (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian 三聯書店, 1997), p. 399.

<sup>79</sup> See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany, N. Y.: State University

appropriate and therefore violent' and the translator 'only comes into authentic being when it is comprehended, i.e. translated.'<sup>80</sup> Schleiermacher portrays a hermeneutic as one who 'knows better than the author did', whose translation will depend on an undemonstratable assumption of universality or harmonic similitude in the human spirit.<sup>81</sup> This authenticates exchange at the level of *tertium comparationis* between two languages, and reasoning at the level of the universal logos.

For Yan Fu the exegete, his universal logos, the *dao*, is phenomenologically operating in a changing flux but remains ontologically one and constant, like Heraclitus' river, deposited in indigenous and foreign classics, which can be meditated, narrated and transmitted by the faithful at heart. It follows that the act of (cross-temporal, cross-cultural and cross-liminal) transference itself will constantly be a function of change. The classics or canonized texts are merely repository of the *dao* and, together with their exegeses, critiques, commentaries and translations, are but transitory nodes in the historical path of narration and transmission of the *dao*, which is 'the' original, the 'primordial noun and verb'. In the process of translation, Yan Fu allows free flow of images and metaphors in the liminal space between canonized texts and cultures to keep in step with changing existential conditions and to reform the epistemological and methodological means to the study of the *dao* for the ultimate goal of cosmological harmony and transcendence. His 'source text' is a collective cosmic text narrated by a stream of transitory authors, his ultimate concern being a cosmological

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of New York Press, 1996).

<sup>80</sup> Paul Ricoeur, 'Existence et herméneutique', in *Le Conflit des interprétations* (Paris, 1960); quoted in George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 313.

<sup>81</sup> Steiner, p. 318.



concern: 'translated!', rather than 'the' translation.<sup>82</sup>

This has great implications for translation research. Just as Schleiermacher argues that universals are language bound and language is system bound, so are literary and translation theories illumined and coloured by systems. Engaging the *xin-da-ya* principles in a hermeneutic circle in relation to the Confucian exegetical tradition, we come to appreciate Yan Fu's holistic philosophy on translation, that translation was like a cosmological act for him in pursuance of the *dao*. This cosmological metaphor expands the potentiality of translation *per se* and forestalls circuitous arguments on *a priori* standards. Moreover, this opens Yan Fu's translation philosophy and the Chinese translation tradition for exchange with 'modern' translation theories and non-Chinese translation traditions, and as such offer assurance about the inheritance of traditional theory in the field of translated literature in China.

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<sup>82</sup> I would like to pay tribute here to James Holmes' use of the word as the title of his seminal work in the discipline of translation studies: James S. Holmes, *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988).

## Conclusion

The time may have come to move beyond the word [translation] as such, to promote it to the realm of metaphor, so to speak, and to leave it there, for the sake of clarity and to counteract the confusion of the different meanings in which the term translation is used and received (and which themselves require translation). The time may have come to translate translation into not Cultural, but Intercultural Studies, as Susan Bassnett proposes in the final chapter of her *Comparative Literature*.<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing study of Yan Fu from multiple perspectives in relation to the Chinese cultural tradition provides insight into the theory and practice of the most studied translator in modern China. New findings from the field of intellectual history help to clarify existing inconsistencies on the understanding of Yan Fu's historical horizon. The examination of his translation practice through a series of metaphor suggests, contrary to the existing consensus in the field of translated literature, that faithfulness to the source text is irrelevant to his translation project. His translation principles are not pure literary notions; rather they are tied to the Confucian literary and exegetical tradition. The study also suggests that for Yan Fu, translation functions as a tool to some noble ends; this precludes the necessity for prescriptive translation norms and *a priori* translation standards. These findings unfold new potentialities for a major research topic that has been challenged as reaching a cul-de-sac and point to a new direction for development in Chinese translation studies.

First of all, the rereading of the Chinese translation tradition presents to us two

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<sup>1</sup> André Lefevere, 'Introductory Comments II', in *Cross Cultural Transfers: Warwick Working Papers in Translation*, ed. by Heloisa Goncalves Barbosa (England: Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Warwick, 1994), pp. v-vii (p. vii); my bracket. See also Susan Bassnett,



translation apexes that witnessed the conversion of foreign elements. Translation as a tool for power conversion became a catalyst of cultural exuberance and system regeneration in ancient China. The adjustment of translation practices to cater for the moral, intellectual and metaphysical concerns of the Chinese gentry led to a proneness to domesticating practices. In the case of sutra translation, the inclination toward Confucian poetics in China and Japan, as opposed to Tibet which was less culturally developed and more attached to Sanskrit sources, displays the influence of power differentials on translation norms, the latter being usually attracted to the literary and cultural tastes of the stronger system. Buddhist scriptural translation contributed to the blending of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, which remains the core of Chinese literate culture today. In effect, this syncretism represents the reinforcement of earthly Confucian ethics by assimilating Buddhist and Daoist metaphysics and extended the course of mainstream Confucianism. On the other hand, the rise of indigenous Buddhist doctrines and sects and the production of Chinese sutras led to the establishment of Chinese Buddhism in its own right. Metaphorically speaking, Chinese Buddhism outgrew its Indian 'source' and became a productive force in the Chinese system.

To date, Buddhism remains the only foreign source being completely 'translated' into a regenerative indigenous force in the Chinese system. Jesuit and Islamic translation met with less success, partly due to the presence of certain fundamental doctrines that have failed to reconcile with dominant Chinese values. Early Jesuit translators did convert to Confucian decorum to facilitate evangelization in exchange for Chinese converts. Their translation of skill and science as supplemental to Bible translation

represents a practical approach to suit the needs of Chinese gentry officials, while the latter's wish to introduce the foreign faith to 'supplement Confucianism and displace Buddhism' or to attain a 'religious *quadrumvirate*' embodies an inherent tendency of the indigenous system to amalgamate incoming elements for system regeneration. The process displays an interesting compromise and power conversion at the cultural and spiritual levels. Yet political intervention and the preservation of certain fundamental Christian doctrines prevented the amalgamation of Christianity into Chinese thinking, so it did not become a highly productive force in the Chinese tradition. As for Islam, its inherent 'inviolable' tie to its sacred language and prophetic tradition resists extraneous assimilation. It thus remains a non-proselytizing religion of the Arab and Persian minorities in northwest China without affecting the lives of the Han majority.

The metaphor of power conversion has led to new and interesting findings in Chinese translation history. The examination of the relationship between power dynamics, translation approach and cultural realities illustrates a new dimension to the operation of some of the most distinguished translators who sought for spiritual and cosmological transcendence. On the other hand, many existing studies tend to churn round the dichotomy between *wen* and *zhi*, that is, cultured accomplishment vs. natural substance, and fail to see that translation seems to have operated on at least two different levels. One is the occupational level, on which the image of the translator was inexorably tied to the metaphors of 'tongue-men' and 'imitating officers', and on which discussions were usually confined to the confused notions of literiness and faithfulness to the source text. This thesis proposes a reexamination of translation at the erudite level, where translation had served as a tool to a higher mission in Chinese translation history. Scriptural translators like Xuanzang considered



themselves transmitters of the Buddhist *dao*. Jesuit translators like Matteo Ricci saw themselves as God's evangelists. Gentry officials like Xu Guangqi regarded translation as a form of power conversion and spiritual transcendence.

This new perspective calls for reassessment of Yan Fu's translation mission. The Confucian repertoire represents a tradition of passing on the multi-faceted images of the *dao*, captured through a multi-faceted exegetical and eisegetical prism that legitimizes extended verification, application and borrowing on the intertextual level (critiques, commentaries and narratives), the intracultural level (with Daosim, Mohism, Legalism and other indigenous peripheral thinking) and the intercultural level (with Buddhism and, in Yan Fu's time, modern Western thinking) on the bedrock of faith. The construction of a history of translation expands the scope and research methodology of studies about individual translators, theories and eras, pointing to a new direction for the development of Chinese translation studies. If translation has not been an end in itself, it would be impractical, if not irrelevant, to design *a priori* standards for translation practice and criticism, such as literiness, accessibility or faithfulness to the source text.

The standard of source text identity seems impertinent, for instance, to Buddhist sutras, which had evolved out of an oral tradition, the 'origin' of which cannot be easily identified. Despite the seeming claim to source text fidelity by some translators, Xuanzang's exegetical and eisegetical interpretation of sutras and discretionary correction of existing versions based on the doctrines of his own sect suggest that his notion of faith was more an academic or spiritual matter than a linguistic or textual matter. It calls for a reexamination of the notion of faith and of Yan Fu's translation

practice, since the consensus in the field of translated literature has been that his translation was modelled on sutra translation and his translation principle of *xin* corresponds to faithfulness to the source text. Actually this view has been challenged since it lacks substantiation and leads to contradictory arguments. Yet the absence of opposite findings and newer research perspectives causes it to remain a mainstream consensus, limiting the study of translation to a dualistic option of 'word' and 'sense' or of 'literal' and 'free' approaches, notions that are not relevant at all to the kind of religious or metaphysical faith under discussion.

The application of new findings from the field of intellectual history, that Yan Fu was a persistent seeker of the Confucian *dao*, enables a new awareness of his persona and reveals the merit of interdisciplinary research in translation studies. A review of Yan's political critiques shows that he was a non-partisan with a conservative political outlook. His acute but balanced criticism of traditional learning on a philosophical level, comparing Chinese and Western epistemologies and substituting modern empirical and inductive methodologies, was deeper and much broader in perspective than most of his contemporaries. The frequent gaps between his source and target texts and his seeming distortion of Western propositions are better seen as an attempt of cross-cultural mediation predicated on an earnest desire to resuscitate primordial indigenous values. His translation of modern Western liberal thought on subjects as diverse as logic, economics, jurisprudence, social and political science and in particular, social Darwinism reveals the prospect of translation as a reformative tool in the Confucian encounter with modernity and imperialistic aggression. The case study of *Tianyanlun* along a similar vein reveals the enormous potential of translation as a tool for higher learning and intellectual critique. It also shows Yan's creative



socialization skills in mending indigenous coordinates and adjusting foreign postulates. The resultant construction of a hybridized conceptual grid shows traces of Chinese presumptive discourse and shaped a Sinicized evolutionary world view inspiring a renaissance of Chinese thought.

The realization of the Confucian extension to Yan Fu's translation project seems to concern the inheritance of Chinese culture. His translation of Modern Western capitalistic culture became a major source of enlightenment in China for several decades before being replaced by Communism. But his vision was incompatible with many existing ideologies, such as the reactionary's Sinocentrism, the Westernizers' substance-application conception, the reform camp's indiscriminate Westerization, the May Fourth students' refutation of Confucianism and the Communists' precarious tendency to linear thinking. His seemingly relentless attack of ossified Confucian doctrines but strong objection to radical political reform and violent revolution headed by students and the masses reflected an elitist strain and a relatively conservative preference for long-term education and systematic progressive evolutionary changes. His translation represents a strenuous attempt to critique, reform and transmit the Confucian-based Chinese tradition in a modern world, treating the issue of cultural inheritance at a three-dimensional level. But the ensuing period of recurrent internal and external turmoil in China engendered political biases that discredited his political stance. The resultant social-political crises and infliction of extremist ideologies also intercepted the peaceful transmission of the Chinese tradition, a core concern of his unique translation project.

Without a stable environment for system regeneration, the hybridized conceptual grid

that Yan had constructed ironically generated a social Darwinian discourse further manipulated by the new generations of reformers and revolutionaries for the transplantation of alien ideologies at the expense of their own cultural tradition. His progressive view of social evolutionary progress was translated into a more violent 'reformation-renovation-revolution' formula. His assertion on the struggle between groups and races became reformulated into a struggle between the Han and Manchu races, then between the Confucian and Western systems and further between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Other newly adapted coordinates, such as the balance between self assertion and socio-moral commitment, the containment of personal right for the overall benefit of the nation and the inclination toward a unified nation under a strong government became twisted for the rationalization of extremist ideologies, further sterilizing the Confucian seedbed against his wish. As a result of political biases, Yan Fu had been narrated for the better half of the last century as a bourgeois reactionary who retrogressed from radicalism to restoration in his late years. This had certainly obstructed fair and comprehensive assessment of his achievement especially in the areas of intellectual history and translation history.

Historical hindsight appears to argue for his vision and existential prejudices. After almost a century of economic and socio-cultural disruption, his country is now developing ultimately on a platform which appears similar to what he had resolutely defended: a gradual, peaceful, long-term and systematic path to reform with unfailing commitment to science, education, liberty, democracy and rejuvenation of the Confucian-based system. The latter cause has been especially hard to discern, due to its very introspective nature and Yan's mixed education background, which apparently made him a Neo-Confucian *avant la lettre* whose cause was gravely



misunderstood and intercepted at a time when an ailing system was on the verge of crisis. Fortunately Yan's vision has received increasing recognition in the field of intellectual history in recent years, which has helped to clear the charge on retrogression and offered a strong case for the multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary rereading of his translation project intended in this thesis. A better appreciation of his manipulative translations – such as the potentialities of the hybridized conceptual grid he postulated, the possible renovation of Confucian coordinates for further syncretism with foreign systems and in particular, reflection upon his excessive attention to conformity which led to ideological manipulation in the past – should offer a way out for China's long and tormenting transition to modernity. It also shows how political realities and biases could distort our perception of translators and writing of translation history, and thus obstruct translation research. Just as we realize that translation is not always an innocent, apolitical act, we might as well draw the same conclusion about translation studies.

The lack of a balanced and comprehensive understanding of Yan Fu's persona in relation to political realities has curbed the development of new research orientations, even though his translations and translation principles has long been a major subject of research. The persistent reduction of the translator as a linguistic, textual or even cultural middlemen responsible for faithful transference of a source text and the literal interpretation of his *xin-da-ya* principles as prescriptive skills and standards have been increasingly discredited as yet another illustration of the incompetence of the Chinese system. It is a pity that a multi-dimensional issue should be reduced to textual criticism based primarily on a linear dichotomy between faithfulness and fluency, or between function and adaptation. The new findings above enable further explication

of Yan Fu's translation project in relation to the Confucian literary tradition. This requires meticulous rereading of Yan's writings, translations, remarks on translation and exchanges with contemporaries, especially with his mentor Wu Rulin, since existing studies in this orientation are scanty and mainly based on pure literary notions, which apparently postdate Yan Fu.

The present study shows an inherent tendency for Yan and Wu to gauge translation and foreign literature using Confucian literary coordinates, as well as designing translation methods utilizing the poetics pertinent to the mainstream Tongcheng school of *guwen*. They discussed Yan Fu's translation as an act of virtue, to be differentiated from the unworthy practice of the 'tongue man', in other words, the occupational translator. The presentation of Yan's translations as narrative of the *dao* confirms the potential of translation as a tool for higher learning and as an accomplishment in the Confucian *wenxue* tradition, in which literature was writing and learning combined, virtue and *dao* in one. The narrative tradition as laid down by Confucius allowed exegetical and eisegetical interpretation of classics and commentaries, which is inherently a kind of intralingual transference, in exemplification of the *dao*. In the late nineteenth century, Yan Fu attempted to reform the existing Confucian system of epistemology and methodology through the critique, rather than full translation, of foreign propositions and their possible mediation with useful indigenous values. The metaphor of narrative infers intracultural and cross-cultural transmission and prompts the examination in this thesis of the logos behind Yan's much studied *xin-da-ya* translation principles.

Yan Fu proposed that the *xin-da-ya* principles were the main difficulties in translation



as well as the guidelines for Confucian literature; he also insisted on pre-Han poetics. This confirms that Yan Fu followed the same standards in translation as any act of Confucian literature. It also necessitates meticulous rereading of his 'General Remarks on Translation' in *Tianyanlun* and rationalization of his tripartite principles against a pristine Confucian grid, which is postulated on the basis of the pithy quotations he cited from the *Classic of Changes*, Confucius' *Analects* and Zuo's *Commentary of Spring and Autumn Annals*. This engenders a hermeneutic circle of Confucian classics that enables a more systematic methodology and more interesting findings about the three principles, avoiding the seeming contradictions and glossing pertaining to existing interpretations of *xin-da-ya* as faithfulness to the source text, comprehensibility and elegance, which are merely pure literary notions. With reference to the exegetical tradition pertaining to the three doctrines as embodied in respective classics, *xin*, *da* and *ya* represent faith, decorum and virtue respectively.

The whole concept of *xin* is a question of Confucian ontological faith. Translation is a means for the cosmological pursuit of the *dao*. *Xin* or no self-deception is essential to self-cultivation and the accomplishment of social and cosmic harmony. In translation, the practice of *xin* infers an act of sincerity allowing no 'enslavement of one's capacity for thought and deliberation', eliciting the release of 'perfect concepts' behind words and images into the numinous, which upon expansion and contraction allows the translator to extend the application of the pure concepts to the utmost. It appears that to Yan Fu and other Confucian exegetes, the original text is not original at all, nor is author 'the' source, since a work of literature is manifestation of virtue and the author is but narrator of the *dao*. Yet this kind of neglect of a physical original is not the same as deconstructionist denial of an original, for in the Chinese tradition,

the notion of a supreme original still exists. This is the ultimate *dao*, a cosmic stream of concepts and consciousness, which can be mediated by human and encapsulated in a myriad of transitory texts and their commentaries and translations. No translation would claim to be an original, not because it is inferior or derivative, but because it cannot be the same as another transitory text. Moreover, it is impossible to be the same transitory text twice. If anything, Yan is attached to a collective cosmic text, an ‘ultimate congruence in thought’, an attempted fusion of horizons of the entire human race. The transitory source texts serve as points of departure to expand his own exegetical and eisegetical undertaking, ‘pooling’ together ‘perfect concepts’ from Western ‘evolutionary masters’ and a constellation of other Western and Chinese ‘sages’. In this way, Yan extended the epistemological means laid down in the *Changes* – free flow of concepts and images – on the intercultural level through translation.

For Yan Fu, any reference to faithfulness to the source or to his free translation not being ‘the standard method of translation’ appears more to be an apologetic than a claim to translation standard, considering the hermeneutical interpretation of *xin* and the fact that he really did extensive rewriting in most translations, even in *Yuanfu*, where he claimed, untruly, that he did not add or alter ‘anything’. His ‘intention’ was probably disclosed most explicitly in his last extended translation – he was after ‘metaphorical’ explication rather than adhering to the source text and this kind of translation represented his humble (but often misunderstood) way to self accomplishment. It is this aim at metaphorical explication that has elevated Yan Fu from the ordinarily servile and almost petty translator to become one of the most influential intellectual during China’s transition from a feudal state to a modern



republic. Thus it is almost impossible to map his translations on the scale of literiness to any useful purpose. Glossing his manipulative practices as ‘exceptional exigencies’ to *xin-da-ya* as ‘golden standards’ of translation would defeat the purpose of a ‘general rule’.

Recognizing the fact that translation was only a tool instead of an end in itself, and that translations were acts of *wenxue* instead of pure literary objects, it follows that *da* concerns the method for the mediation of concepts in speech at large, but not the verbal text itself. With reference to Confucian poetics, what matters in speech, that is, *da*, should be decorum for reaching the *dao* rather than the ‘original message’ itself. The notion of *da* encompasses the image of the Confucian gentleman whose interest in life should be much more comprehensive than mere stylistic accomplishment and who wants his mission to be understood. *Da* is the proper means to carry through the *dao*, in translation as in writing as in rewriting, all of which follow the same requisites in a holistic tradition and begin with a simulacrum of spontaneity and end with a transitory but new representation of the transference of images and concepts upon which signification is changed. In this way, the world is presented to us as ‘translations of translations of translations’.

The concept of *ya* must be interpreted in relation to *wen*. The focus of *wen* lies in the mirroring of virtue and righteousness to create an impact. His incisive critique of foreign works in the form of translation was an act of *ya*. *Ya* concerns performance, and performance begets stylistics in the subsequent semiotic representation of mediated reason and pure concept. The question of (refined) expression is not ruled out but inscribed; it is simply not the question to pore. With an exclusive, almost

puritanical taste in poetics, Yan Fu believed that pre-Han *guwen*, the traditional vehicle for narrating the *dao*, would make it easier to illustrate aptly the substance of abstruse works, even though *guwen* was not extremely popular those days except among the elite. As for the vulgar and expedient vernacular, though an increasingly popular medium especially for fiction and newspapers but untried on works containing profound reasoning and subtle thought, Yan believed it was against the decorum and uncondusive to the manifestation of virtue, often leading to gross misinterpretation, straining the meaning to fit the word. That is why he insisted that the choice of *ya* was not a matter of eccentricity and that people misunderstood the intention behind his abstruse language and involved style. For him, pre-Han *guwen* was the only consummate vehicle of *da* and *ya*, or decorum and virtue, in translation as in writing or other modes of conduct. It is because Confucian speech and translation functioned as a performative act, and the *raison d'être* of the conduct of *da* and *ya* was the conduct of *xin*, or faith in the Confucian *dao*.

Yan Fu's use of pre-Han *guwen* poetics also illustrates the importance of the medium of cultural transmission and inheritance. Yan's insistence on the use of a conservative or puritanical textual grid to construct a reformative and hybridized conceptual grid displays immanent dialectical contradictions that consequently disrupted his idealized transmission. In other words, his attempted reformation of the Confucian tradition through intellectual critique failed (partly) because it was not matched by a corresponding reformation of Confucian poetics in narrating the *dao*. While his hybridized evolutionary discourse became a highly productive force in the Chinese conceptual grid, his Confucian poetics ceased to be a productive force in the indigenous textual grid and was eventually eliminated in an evolutionary struggle



with the new education system and the new world view that he himself had helped to forge. It seems that Yan Fu had overestimated the durability of the Confucian canon at a time when the indigenous system was experiencing a crisis. Apart from *Tianyanlun*, his other *guwen* translations had not been extremely successful in fusing with indigenous doctrines in various disciplines. Yet later vernacular translations of the same source texts, mostly claiming to be faithful translations of the source text, also seem incapable of causing significant repercussions in the social, economic, intellectual and political arenas. Perhaps the use of the vernacular might have made his translations more successful, so that his reformative agenda could have led to scientific and intellectual advancement as remarkable as that after Martin Luther. Perhaps the translation of his translations in the vernacular could provide insight into how pertinent Confucian coordinates could be revived and made beneficial to a modern China, or even result in another cultural exuberance.

The application of Chinese exegetical hermeneutics produces path breaking findings that serve to valorize translation as a virtuous act of conduct in the Chinese tradition and as a cosmological transference of pure concepts and images in the human endeavour to understanding truth and being. Allowing free play of Yan Fu's epigrammatic translation principles in a hermeneutical circle breaks the threshold of prejudgment and raises his translation principles and translation project as a whole to the philosophical level. It is on this level that the study of translation knows no cultural or political boundary, that Chinese translation studies are not inferior to, let alone alienated from 'modern' or 'Western' translation studies. Just as the metaphorical explication of texts can effect understanding between cultures and reminds us of the practical differences between cultures, so too can the use of

metaphors in translation studies facilitate dialogue and exchange between diverse translation traditions, such as the metaphors of power conversion, reformation, narrative, intellectual critique and cosmological pursuit in this thesis. This cosmological metaphor expands the potentiality of translation *per se* and forestalls circuitous arguments on *a priori* standards. On the metaphorical level, the translation project could fuse with the philosophical project and the study of the local might have an impact on the global.

This perspective opens Yan Fu's translation philosophy and the Chinese translation tradition for exchange with 'modern' translation theories and non-Chinese translation traditions. It is not surprising that the moral faith exercised by seekers of the Confucian *dao* is sometimes compared to religious faith, and Confucian exegesis likened to a hermeneutic circle in which critical and existential testing of knowledge becomes a regenerative circle. Although Yan Fu's translation project, just as the practice of any other translator, is inexorably tradition bound, his ultimate concern, 'translated!', exhibits an affinity with the Heideggerian epistemological concern for the perpetual unfolding of 'Being-there' as an existential answer to the eternal question of Being. Yan's belief in 'hundreds of ways of deliberation' ultimately coming to 'the same end' parallels Schleiermacher's hermeneutic who 'knows better than the author did' and whose translation depends on an undemonstratable assumption of universality or harmonic similitude in the human spirit. His exegetical engagement in a process of truth discovery and system regeneration resembles George Steiner's existential translator, to whom understanding as an act in the search of Being-there is 'inherently appropriate and therefore violent' and the translator 'only comes into authentic being when it is comprehended, i.e. translated.'



The promotion of the complex notion of translation beyond the word itself to the realm of metaphor, as suggested by André Lefevere, facilitates exchange between languages and systems at the level of *tertium comparationis* and enables reasoning at the level of the universal logos. For the present study of Yan Fu, the treating of translation as a metaphor in and of itself provides insight into Chinese translation studies and foster intracultural and intercultural development. It helps to avoid recurrent arguments and leads to more balanced and constructive perspectives for the future development of a major research topic. The new findings offer assurance for the inheritance of Chinese culture and system regeneration in a modern world. A more discerned awareness of the cross-cultural and cross-liminal operations of China's past encounters with outside cultures helps to foster a better understanding between China and other cultures in a globalized era. The study of the philosophical extension of translation also opens the possibility of exchange between a traditional theory and modern theories and between the Chinese translation tradition and other traditions.

Appendix I    A Brief Chronology of Chinese History<sup>1</sup>

Dates	Major Periods/Dynasties	
c. 2852 – c. 2700 BC	Mythical founders of Chinese civilization: Fu Xi 伏羲 – inventor of writing, nets and snares, hunting and fishing Shen Nong 神農 – inventor of agriculture and commerce	
c. 2700 – c. 2200 BC	Legendary sage kings: Yellow Emperor 黃帝 King Yao of Tang 唐堯 King Shun of Yu 虞舜	
c. 2200 – c. 1750 BC	Xia 夏	
c. 1750 – c. 1040 BC	Shang 商	
c. 1100 – c. 771 BC	Zhou <sup>2</sup> 周	Western Zhou 西周
c. 770 – 256 BC		Eastern Zhou 東周
770 – 476 BC 475 – 221 BC		Spring and Autumn Period 春秋 Period of Warring States 戰國
221 – 206 BC	Qin 秦	
206 BC – AD 24	Han 漢 <sup>3</sup>	Western/Earlier Han 西漢
25 – 220		Eastern/Later Han 東漢
220 – 265	Era of the Three Kingdoms <sup>4</sup> 三國	Wei 魏
221 – 263		Shu Han 蜀漢
222 – 280		Wu 吳

<sup>1</sup> Compiled with reference to: *Hanying Cidian Bianxie Zu* 漢英詞典編寫組 [Editorial Group of *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary*] (eds.), *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* = 漢英詞典 (Hong Kong: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1985), p. 972; Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2 vols. (New York : Columbia University Press, 1999), I, p. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> The period c. 600 – 100 BC is often called the Classical Age or the Period of Philosophers, when ‘a hundred schools’ of thought were believed to exist before the institutionalization of Confucianism as the state orthodoxy in the Han Dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> Since the Han Dynasty, the Central Plains were predominantly under the reign of rulers of the Han nationality, except in the Northern Dynasties and the Yuan and Qing Dynasties. In the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties, the reign of the Han nationality was threatened by other invading nationalities from the north. The distinction between Han and non-Han reign was important in ancient China, since the Han nationality made up the majority of the population and was held to be culturally superior to other nationalities. Reigning non-Han nationalities are marked in parentheses in this table.

<sup>4</sup> The period 220 – 589 (that is, between the fall of the Han Dynasty and reunion under the Sui Dynasty) is often referred to as the Period of North-South Disunion.



265 – 316	Jin 晉	Western Jin 西晉	
317 – 420		Eastern Jin 東晉	
420 – 479	Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝	Southern Dynasties 南朝	Song 宋
479 – 502			Qi 齊
502 – 557			Liang 梁
557 – 589			Chen 陳
386 – 534		Northern Dynasties 北朝	Northern Wei 北魏
534 – 550			Eastern Wei 東魏
535 – 556			Western Wei 西魏
550 - 577			Northern Qi 北齊
557 - 581			Northern Zhou 北周
581 - 618	Sui 隋		
618 - 907	Tang 唐		
907 - 923	Five Dynasties 五代	Later Liang 後梁	
923 - 936		Later Tang 後唐	
936 - 946		Later Jin 後晉	
947 - 950		Later Han 後漢	
951 - 960		Later Zhou 後周	
960 – 1127 916 - 1125	Song 宋	Northern Song 北宋 With the Liao Empire (Qidan nationality) across the northern border 遼	
1127 – 1279 1115 - 1234		Southern Song 南宋 With the Jin Empire (Ruzhen nationality) in North China 金	
1271 - 1368	Yuan (Mongol nationality) 元		
1368 - 1644	Ming 明		
1644 - 1911	Qing (Manchu nationality) 清		
1912 - 1949	Republic of China 中華民國		
1949 -	People's Republic of China 中華人民共和國		

## Appendix II

### ‘General Remarks on Translation’, *Tianyanlun*<sup>5</sup>

Yan Fu

1. Translation involves three requirements difficult to fulfill: faithfulness (信) [*xin*], comprehensibility (達) [*da*] and elegance (雅) [*ya*]. Faithfulness is difficult enough to attain but a translation that is faithful but not comprehensible is no translation at all. Comprehensibility is therefore of prime importance. Since China’s opening to foreign trade by sea, there has been no lack of interpreters and translators. But if you assign them any book to translate and tell them to meet these two requirements, few can do so. The reasons for their inability are: superficiality, partiality and lack of discrimination. This book is based on the new knowledge of the West acquired during the last fifty years and was one of the author’s later works. My translation attempts to present its profound thought. It does not follow the exact order of words and sentences of the original text but reorganizes and elaborates. However, it does not deviate from the original ideas. It is more an exposition than a translation as it seeks to elaborate – an unorthodox way of transmission. Kumaarajiva said: ‘Whoever imitates me would fall.’ There will be many others coming after me in translation work; I sincerely hope that they will not use this book as an excuse for their failings.

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<sup>5</sup> Yan Fu, ‘General Remarks on Translation’, *Tianyanlun* = (《天演論》譯例言), trans. by C. Y. Hsu (徐兆鏞), *Renditions*, 1 (1973), 4-6; my brackets. Hsu’s translation does not contain the last paragraph of the Chinese version published in 1898, which accounts for the translation and publication background of *Tianyanlun*; nor does it reflect my re-interpretation of the *xin-da-ya* principles proposed in this dissertation. It is appended here nevertheless to offer a glimpse of the general out-of-context understanding of Yan Fu’s translation theory hitherto. Hsu used Wade-Giles transcription for Chinese names. I have changed them to Hanyu Pinyin to follow the practice in this dissertation.



2. Terms in Western language texts are defined as they occur, somewhat similar to digressions in Chinese. What comes after elaborates what goes before and completes the sense and structure. A sentence in a Western language consists of from two or three words to tens or hundreds of words. If we should follow this construction in translation, it would not be comprehensible, and if we should delete and abridge, we might miss some of the ideas expressed in the original. When the translator has understood thoroughly and digested the whole text he will then be able to rewrite it in the best manner possible. Since the original is profound in thought and involved in style, which are difficult to convey together, he should correlate what precedes and what follows to bring out the theme. All this effort is to achieve comprehensibility; for only when a piece of translation is comprehensible can it be regarded as faithful.
  
3. The *Yijing (Book of Changes)* says: 'Fidelity is the basis of writing.' Confucius said, 'Writing should be comprehensible.' He also said, 'Where language has no refinement, its effects will not extend far.' These three dicta set the right course for literature and are the guidelines for translation. In addition to faithfulness and comprehensibility, we should strive for elegance in translation. This is not just for extending the effects far. In using the syntax and style of the pre-Han period one actually facilitates the comprehensibility of the profound principles and subtle thoughts whereas in using the modern vernacular one finds it difficult to make things comprehensible. Oftentimes, straining the meaning but slightly to fit the language can result in gross misinterpretations. Inevitably I had to make a choice between these two media, not that I have a preference for the eccentric. My translation has been criticized for its abstruse language and involved style. But I must say this is the result of my determined effort at comprehensibility. The

treatise in the book is largely based upon logic, mathematics and science as well as astronomy. If a reader is not familiar with these studies, even if he is of the same nationality and speaks the same language as the author, he won't be able to comprehend much, far less by reading a translation.

4. New theories have been advanced in quick succession, giving rise to a profusion of new terms. No such terms could be found in Chinese. Though some Chinese expressions approximate the original, there are yet discrepancies. Confronted with such a situation, a translator can only use his own judgment and coin a term according to the sense. But this is easier said than done. For instance, Part I of this book consists of more than ten prolegomena. These are simple introductory remarks on the profound treatise. I first translated 'prolegomena' as *zhiyan* (discursive remarks). But Xia Zengyou of Qiantang County said this term was trite and suggested *xuantan* (discursive talks), which is found in the Buddhist scriptures. When the venerable Wu Rulun of Tongcheng County saw my translation, he said that since *zhiyan* had become trite and *xuantan* was derived from Buddhism, and neither was not what an independent mind would adopt, it would be better to follow the precedent set by the ancient Chinese philosophers of giving a heading to each chapter. Xia Zengyou argued that in that case each chapter would become an essay by itself and this would be contradictory to the original plan of treating one theme in the book. However, in the terms *xuantan* and *xuanshu* (discursive commentary) the word *xuan* means 'attached'. It connotes a summary or gist of some basic idea and does not correspond to the present sense. The term therefore should not be used. So I followed the original heading, translating it as *daoyan* (introductory remarks) and, accepting Wu's suggestion, supplied a subhead to each chapter for the convenience of the reader. This shows the difficulty of determining a term, and in going about the task one



can hardly escape the criticism of being half-baked. Other terms such as *wujing* (struggle for existence), *tianze* (natural selection), *chuneng* (potentiality) and *shixiao* (actuality) are my creations. The determination of a term often took a full month's pondering. I leave it to the discerning and wise to commend or condemn me.

5. The book deals mainly with the schools of thought since ancient Greece. Included are the renowned thinkers of various periods whose thoughts have influenced the minds of the people of the West for some two thousand years. Whoever engages in Western studies should know about them. At the end of a chapter I record briefly the lives and achievements of these men for the reference of scholars who may want to know about them and their times.
6. The pursuit of truth is akin to the practice of government in that both place a premium on the pooling of ideas. Where the present work agrees or differs with other books, from what I know I note them in the postscript for the reader's reference. Now and then I inject my personal views in the spirit of 'Seeking Friends' in the *Shijing* (Book of Odes) and 'Mutual Encouragement and Assistance' in the *Yijing*. Whether my views are sound or not I leave to public judgment. I do not insist on my own rectitude. If anyone should accuse me of being pretentious and seeking notoriety for myself, he misunderstands my intention in taking great pains to translate this book.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this dissertation, Chinese titles are given in the following order: title in Hanyu Pinyin transcription, title in Chinese and then my English translation in square brackets. Where a work is published with both a Chinese and an English title, the title will be presented in this way: title in English = title in Chinese. Chinese authors and publishers are transcribed primarily in Hanyu Pinyin or as they appear in the publications concerned.



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